

**United by Isolation:  
How Themes of Alienation and Stylistic Rebellion in Art and Literature Can  
Provide Common Ground for Adolescents**

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## **NARRATIVE**

### **Introduction**

Say goodbye to “Once upon a time...” No more knight in shining armor. After weeks of lessons on grammar and writing rules, this unit will be a refreshing twist. My students and I will examine innovative techniques that writers and artists use to depart from the norm. We will analyze a broad spectrum of art and literature that demonstrates varying degrees of stylistic rebellion and alienation.

Through unique and sometimes disturbing subject matter and presentation, many artists intentionally shock or jolt their audience by creating “alien” texts that differ drastically from the typical approach. The reader/viewer is often left feeling uncomfortable. The message, if there is one at all, is a far cry from Aesop’s fables. The characters, if there are any, do not always win in the end or learn a valuable, life-altering lesson. Students will have a difficult time predicting what will happen next in these stories! We will examine artists in diverse media who purposefully craft their works in order to achieve certain effects, violate the status quo, and challenge audiences to gain new perspectives.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Adolescence is a time of self-exploration and a quest for identity. Young adults often struggle between following rules and expressing themselves. This unit will provide an outlet for soul-searching adolescents.

Although the subject matter and presentation of many works of modern art and literature may be disturbing or depressing, audiences are often able to relate to these innovative interpretations. In Power to Hurt: The Virtues of Alienation, William Monroe reflects on the virtues of alienistic writing: “The voice represents a person that we believe in, a person who promises us, in effect, that the imaginative experience being offered by the text will, all other things being equal, benefit us in some direct way: divert, entertain, distract, inform, confront, instruct, trouble, or whatever, but finally be worth our while” (126).

Students will be encouraged to discuss their own feelings of alienation and express these feelings in their own original work. They may be comforted to discover that their classmates share many of the same feelings of isolation. Through exposure to unique

methods of presentation, students will be inspired to adopt more creative approaches to writing and will be permitted to rebel in a constructive way. Ironically, the author's attempt to alienate his readers can actually produce the opposite effect; people can unite as a result of their common experiences of alienation. We can relate to the isolated characters and imperfect presentation because these situations reflect life itself. Even if we have not experienced alienation in precisely the same manner as that which is being portrayed, we can share with other readers the experience of the work. Monroe asserts, "The writing itself is a solicitation, a 'Come be with me, come be like me' invitation" (122).

Because so many of the students I instruct are visual learners, the examination of literature in conjunction with art will be a beneficial way to present the material. They will be able to draw parallels between visual and written manifestations of the same concept and will also be given the opportunity to express themselves visually in their final project.

Students will have the opportunity to explore why artists use particular strategies to achieve certain effects, and be able to incorporate these strategies in their own writing. By studying different means of expression, students will feel validated to express themselves in unique ways that suit their own voice. They will learn that the way they write can affect the tone and message they want to send to the reader.

Many students have been locked into formula writing. The rigid five-paragraph essay that is so often emphasized in English classes is a prime example of this. In this unit, they will be granted the freedom to express themselves without being confined or weighed down by topic sentences and punctuating dialogue. Students will be encouraged to become writing rebels in both subject matter and method of presentation. They can write in stream of consciousness fashion in order to mimic the way they think as well as turn the infamous plot diagram upside down! Students will be encouraged to write for themselves and not be confined by the audience's expectations. They will not be stifled by either the expectations of the reader or by whether their writing contains enough characterization. They will not have to portray idealistic situations or resolve every conflict. They will learn the value of silence in writing. Raymond Carver, a contemporary American fiction writer, uses this technique. He "depict[s] his characters as isolated from others and mirror[s] this alienated sense of being through minimal language, evoking his characters' inability to communicate their circumstances" ("Raymond Carver," 4). Students will be challenged to break all the rules of writing and communicate in ways they never have.

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

### “Frame Tale”

We will begin our unit with John Barth’s ingenious, three-dimensional story. “Frame Tale” is the first of many innovative stories in Lost in the Funhouse. The story is one page long with ten words total—five on the front and five on the back. The words state, “Once upon a time there was a story that began.” Also on the front page is a dotted line and specific instructions telling the reader, “Cut on dotted line. Twist end once and fasten.” When the reader does so, he has created a three-dimensional Mobius strip that critic Steven M. Bell states is “not just a circle, but rather a circle with a twist” (4). In the forward of Barth’s book, the author describes “Frame-Tale” as “the shortest story in the English language; on the other hand, it’s endless.” The story has no resolution, yet it makes perfect sense. This “shortest short story” will set the tone for the examination of other nontraditional methods of presentation.

“Frame-Tale” can be coupled with M.C. Escher’s *Mobius Strip II* (1963), an artistic representation of the same concept. The Dutch graphic artist portrays ants crawling on the surface of the strip. Escher states, “An endless ring-shaped band usually has two distinct surfaces, one inside and one outside. Yet on this strip nine red ants crawl after each other and travel the front side as well as the reverse side. Therefore the strip has only one surface” (Escher, 12). Ironically, Escher captures the wonders of this three-dimensional structure in a two-dimensional illustration.

### “Lost in the Funhouse”

We will also examine the short story for which Barth’s book was named, “Lost in the Funhouse.” It is a work of metafiction that follows “the twentieth-century heightening of linguistic self-consciousness” (Bell, 1). Barth sporadically interrupts his own story to provide the reader with a writing handbook. He begins the story with Ambrose, an adolescent boy. For him, the funhouse is “*a place of fear and confusion*” He describes how the character Ambrose and his family are celebrating the Fourth of July at the beach. In italics, he explains that Independence Day is “*the most secular holiday of The United States of America.*” He is only four sentences into telling the story when the writing handbook interruptions begin to appear.

He provides a detailed explanation of the proper use of italics. “Italics are also employed, in fiction stories especially, for ‘outside,’ intrusive, or artificial voices, such as the text of telegrams and newspaper articles, et cetera.” As he continues the story, he uses initials and blanks in lieu of writing out the specific name of the street and city to which the characters are traveling. Barth intrudes again to provide an explanation for why he did this. “Initials, blanks, or both were often substituted for proper names in nineteenth century fiction to enhance the illusion of reality.”

After a quick return to Ambrose, the reader is distracted again by “the standard methods of characterization” and by the value of using the five senses so “the reader’s imagination is oriented to the scene.” Barth employs these tips the next time he returns to Ambrose’s story. He uses the five senses to describe “the fragrance of the ocean” and “the sound of the breakers.” Next, Barth deviates from his normal handbook interruptions into more self-conscious intrusions about the story’s progression or lack thereof. Then, after divulging the traditional function of the beginning, middle, and end of a story, Barth points out that in his story “a long time has gone by already without anything happening” (71-7).

After examination of the first six pages (The story is twenty-six tedious, yet entertaining pages with some high school inappropriate subject matter.), it is apparent that the author is as frustrated with this story as the reader. In an attempt to make better sense of the story, students should highlight the handbook elements so as to differentiate them from the story of Ambrose. This will lead into a discussion of how “Lost in the Funhouse” is an example of writer self-consciousness. We will define self-consciousness and discuss its impact on adolescents. Since Ambrose is a boy “at that awkward age,” the writer’s insecurity and frustration parallels the insecurity and frustration of his main character.

The concept of self-consciousness that is emphasized in “Lost in the Funhouse” is represented visually in the works of M.C. Escher and Norman Rockwell. In *Drawing Hands* (1948), Escher draws a picture of a pair of hands drawing themselves and in *Triple Self Portrait* (1960), Rockwell paints a picture of himself painting a self-portrait. Like Barth, these works focus on the process of creating and emphasize the role of the creator.

In Rockwell’s painting, the viewer is able to see three interpretations of how the artist sees himself. He can contrast the “real” mirror image of Rockwell with the image he is painting on the canvas with the painter who sits in front of the canvas. Not only is the viewer able to enjoy a work of art, but he also gets a glimpse of how the artist perceives himself in the process of creating.

### **“Fat”**

Raymond Carver’s story telling methods are also innovative. He ignores the traditional elements of a short story. “Carver’s colloquial dialogue, replete with mundane observations that are suggestive of unsatisfied emotions and desires, often control the story while other narrative elements, such as description, setting, and characterization are minimal” (“Raymond Carver,” 4). In “Fat,” Carver recreates a conversation between two friends over “coffee and cigarettes.” Carver’s narrator relates the story so realistically, that the reader feels as if he/she is hearing the actual conversation. To make the reader’s experience as authentic as possible, Carver eliminates the traditional use of quotation marks and explanatory words. Explaining who said the quote and how the quote was said would detract from the reader’s ability to experience the story first-hand and would

disrupt the flow of the narrator's story. The only explanatory words the reader gets are from the narrator, not from Carver.

The narrator begins her story by explaining to the reader that she is retelling a story she already told once to her friend Rita about an experience she had waiting on the table of a very fat man. The man and his companion eat an exorbitant amount of food. The narrator defends the fat man when other waiters make derogatory comments. When Leandor, a co-worker, states, "God he's fat!" the narrator replies, "He can't help it, so shut up" (66). While the narrator appears compassionate, she also seems to derive pleasure from watching the fat man make a spectacle of himself. She is a bit too accommodating. For example, she gives him an extra large spoonful of sour cream and checks the sugar bowl to see if it needs to be refilled. She tells Rita, "I know I was after something. But I don't know what" (67).

That night, Rudy, the narrator's boyfriend/co-worker, fondly recalls memories of fat people that he used to ridicule in his childhood years. The narrator is unable to offer a response, "I can't think of anything to say, so we drink our tea and pretty soon I get up to go to bed." When Rudy tries to be romantic, the narrator suddenly feels "terrifically fat." After the narrator tells this to Rita, she can tell Rita is unsure how to respond to such a bizarre admission. Rita "doesn't know what to make of it" (69).

Several times Rita yearns for the narrator to make sense of her story, but she is unable to do so. Like Rita, the reader is also left with a feeling of dissatisfaction. We want desperately for the narrator to communicate her frustration with us, but she "won't go into it" (69). The reader is left with many questions. Why did this seemingly insignificant experience have such an impact on the narrator? What was she "after" when she was waiting on the fat man? Why does she suddenly feel "terrifically fat" that night? What exactly is it that makes her proclaim to the reader, "My life is going to change. I feel it."? Does this mean she is going to dump Rudy because his insensitivity towards fat people made her see him in a different light? If so, doesn't this make her hypocritical because she was also insensitive when she herself derived pleasure from watching the fat man's overindulgence?

This story is a prime example of what one critic describes as Carver's ability to "create tension in his stories through omission and understatement thereby forcing conclusions about a story's meaning upon the reader" ("Raymond Carver," 3). The only real resolution the reader can attain from "Fat" is to compare it to the complexity and randomness of real life. Not every occurrence in real life can be explained in simple terms and not every question can be answered.

### **"Falling Dog"**

Like Carver, Donald Barthelme's writing often reflects the randomness of everyday life. In "Falling Dog," a Welsh sculptor is walking down the street when a dog falls on him from a third or fourth story window. This bizarre experience is cathartic for the narrator

because it inspires him at a time when he is “in that unhappiest of states, between images” (172). The sculptor’s latest work, *Yawning Man*, has received bad reviews, but now the act of a dog falling on him presents a glimmer of hope for the artist. “I had done upward of two thousand Yawning Men in every known material, and I was tired of it . . . but now I had the Falling Dog, what happiness” (173). Barthelme models creative thinking for the reader as the narrator lists impressions and images that come to the artist’s mind as a result of the dog’s descent.

dirty and clean dogs  
ultraclean dogs, laboratory animals  
thrown or flung dogs  
in series, Indian file  
an exploded view of the Falling Dog  
head, heart, liver, lights (172-3)

Barthelme humorously shows us that creativity can strike when you least expect it and it can stem from something as random as a dog falling on you. Most students can relate to the frustration of boredom and writer’s block. If they are not familiar with the elation of a creative breakthrough, then this story will allow them to experience it.

### “The School”

Barthelme uses humor in another of his short stories called “The School.” Like Carver, Barthelme uses an informal, conversational language. The reader is immediately drawn into the story when the narrator directly addresses him with expressions such as “you remember” and “you know.” It is as if the narrator and reader are friends who have shared stories in the past. The writing mirrors conversation because some thoughts are not completed. Barthelme uses ellipses to indicate that the reader can finish the narrator’s train of thought without the narrator having to waste time explaining it: “that was part of their education, to see how, you know, the root systems . . . and also the sense of responsibility, taking care of things” (309).

The narrator of “The School” is a teacher reflecting on his experience teaching the lesson of responsibility. The students are required to take care of live plants and animals, but every time they receive something new to take care of, it dies. Sometimes the death is a result of unintentional neglect. After the salamander died, the students learned “not to carry them around in plastic bags.” Sometimes the deaths are due to illnesses and accidents. Sometimes there is no explanation for the deaths except the natural cycle of life. When a Korean orphan that the class adopted dies, the kids begin to wonder if something is wrong with their school. Their teacher assures them it is “just a run of bad luck.” The narrator states, “We had an extraordinary number of parents passing away, for instance. There were I think two heart attacks and two suicides, one drowning, and four killed together in a car accident” (310-311).

At the end of the story, the students ask the inevitable question: “Where do they all go?” After the narrator responds with “I don’t know,” the children begin to provide their teacher with a sophisticated text book definition of the meaning of life: “Isn’t death, considered as a fundamental datum, the means by which the taken-for-granted mundanity of the everyday may be transcended in the direction of--.” Although the narrator is unable to offer the students a concrete explanation, he states that there is “value everywhere.” Immediately after this statement, Helen, the narrator’s significant other, hugs him and the children get excited. It is clear that the example set by the teacher and their every day experiences are teaching the kids more about the meaning of life than any elaborate definitions learned in a theology class. The children’s awkward, loaded definition juxtaposed with the genuineness of the narrator’s language emphasizes this point. Clearly, death is a part of life, but it serves as a reminder to savor life’s experiences. According to the narrator, “Life [not death] is that which gives meaning to life” (311-312).

#### Deviations from the traditional family in art and Kafka’s Metamorphosis

One concept that is often portrayed in nontraditional ways is family. First we will explore society’s definition of the ideal family. We will discuss manifestations of this concept in television, art, and literature such as “Leave it to Beaver” and family portraits in early American Art. Thomas Sully depicts an idealistic family scene in his 1840 painting entitled “Mother and Son.” He eloquently portrays a graceful mother and son with rounded features and a peaceful ocean in the background. The young boy affectionately rests his hand on his mother’s leg as he gently nudges the family dog with his foot. “The facial expressions are pensive and thoughtful, with a hint of a sad, sweet smile, the gentle melancholy of popular poetic sentiment” (Mendelowitz, 193).

In stark contrast to this is Phillip Evergood’s 1938 painting “Don’t Cry, Mother.” The distraught mother sits at one end of a table desperately reaching towards her two children who sit expressionless at the opposite end. The empty plates and lack of clothing reveal great suffering and poverty. Evergood “employed typical Expressionistic distortions of anatomical forms, exaggerations of details, and violations of perspective” (Mendelowitz, 412). Each artists’ method of presentation is purposeful and calculated, the end result being dichotomous views of family. Whereas Sully’s portrait evokes feelings that can be described as pleasant and romantic, Evergood’s treatment is intense and disturbing.

An outcome similar to Evergood’s can be achieved in writing. Franz Kafka’s Metamorphosis depicts a family that is far from perfect. Due to unforeseen circumstances, “When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed into a monstrous vermin” (3). Instead of providing him with unconditional love and support, Gregor’s family is embarrassed by him. At the beginning of the story, they are more compassionate. For example, in an effort to find out exactly what an oversized cockroach likes to eat, Gregor’s sister, “brought him a wide

assortment of things, all spread out on an old newspaper . . . And out of a sense of delicacy, since she knew that Gregor would not eat in front of her, she left hurriedly, and even turned the key, just so that Gregor should know that he might make himself as comfortable as he wanted” (24). The family’s treatment of Gregor worsens, however, as the story progresses and they eventually reject him. Contributing to his death is the festering wound resulting from a rotten apple that his father lodged in his back. Gregor dies soon after he overhears his sister proclaim, “It [Gregor] has to go!” (52).

Kafka certainly deviates from the idealistic notion of family. He is able to unite his readers in their sympathy for this altruistic vermin and their hatred of Gregor’s coldhearted family. One cannot help but feel sorry for Gregor Samsa who still puts his family first, even after their cruel treatment. He knows his family would be happier without him. “His conviction that he would have to disappear was, if possible, even firmer than his sister’s . . . Then, without his consent, his head sank down to the floor, and from his nostrils streamed his last weak breath” (54).

## **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

### **Introductory Lesson**

What makes something a work of art or a piece of writing? What qualities does it have to have? It is important to establish a definition of traditional writing and art before exposing students to non-traditional works. Although art and beauty are very subjective, not every single thing in existence can be considered art. Art is something presented to the viewer in a unique way for contemplation. Through class brainstorming and classification exercises students will be able to generate their own definition of art.

The goal is for the students to discover that art is something presented to the viewer in a distinctive manner for reflection. A urinal in any bathroom would not be considered art, but Marcel Duchamp presented a urinal in a unique way by renaming it *Fountain*. A comparison can be made with the *Trevi Fountain*. Clearly the Trevi Fountain required greater effort to create than DuChamp’s *Fountain* (1917), but does this make it more of a work of art?

Write the word “Art” on the chalkboard or overhead. Have students raise their hands if they have an idea to contribute to the definition of art. Write each student’s comments on the board. Once all the ideas have been written on the board, the class will decide if any ideas should be discarded and come to a general consensus on the definition.

Divide the class into small groups. Give the students assorted pictures. The pictures should include some classic representations of art such as Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* (1484), some non-traditional works of art such as Mark Rothko’s *Number 10* (1950), and some pictures or items that are clearly not art such as a rock or a piece of string. Have them make three piles: Definitely Art, Definitely Not Art, and Unsure. Using the definition of art, students will discuss the properties of each item and place it in the



appropriate category. This process may make the students want to add or change characteristics of art on the initial brainstorming.

Once the small groups have categorized each piece, allow each group to present its discoveries. This will, most likely, lead to a debate on whether other groups classified their items correctly. After all groups have presented and the discussion has subsided, give students the dictionary definition of art:

1. a. The activity of creating beautiful things. b. Works, such as painting or poetry, resulting from such an activity. 2. A branch of artistic activity, as musical composition, using a special medium and technique. 3. The aesthetic values of an artist as expressed in his works. 4. Any of various disciplines, as the humanities, that do not rely exclusively on the scientific method (The American Heritage Dictionary).

Students can once again adjust their original definition accordingly. Then, have students categorize the items again into “traditional art” and “non-traditional art.” Based on their classifications, students should be able to generate a definition of traditional and non-traditional art.

This activity will lead into the larger unit on non-traditional literature because writing can be explored in a similar fashion. Students will next ponder: What makes a story a story? What qualities does traditional writing have? This would be an excellent opportunity to review the elements of a short story and prepare students for the innovative, non-traditional writing in the ensuing unit.

### **Short Story Units**

For each short story, there are discussion questions and a reflection topic. Allow one day per short story. Divide the class into small groups with three students per group. Each student will have a role: reader, writer, or presenter. First, the reader will read the story aloud to his/her group. Immediately after this reading, the group will discuss the meaning of the story and the writer will jot down the group’s overall impressions of the story in brainstorming or note-taking format. Next, have the students answer the discussion questions. The group may want the reader to read the story aloud a second time before they begin answering the questions. After all groups have completed the discussion questions, the presenters will read the group’s responses to the class. Allow constructive comments and questions from the students after each presentation.

After all groups have presented, provide the students with your own literary insights and analytical information from the “teachings strategies” section. Encourage students to offer more of their own unique perspectives and opinions during the discussion.

Once the discussion has ceased, give students the reflection topic. This will be individual work that should be finished for homework. Responses should be at least one

page per question. Students should be graded according to their participation as well as the quality and content of their responses.

### Questions on “Frame Tale”

Give students a copy of “Frame Tale.” Let students discover on their own how to assemble it using scissors and tape or a stapler.

#### *Discussion Questions*

Can this be classified as a story?  
What short story elements, if any, does it possess?  
To what senses does it appeal?

#### *Reflection Topic*

Reflect on Barth’s own description of his bizarre story. “It’s the shortest story in the English language; on the other hand it’s endless” (vii).

### Questions on “Falling Dog”

#### *Discussion Questions*

How is the style of this story different from a traditional story format?  
How does the story’s presentation contribute to the story itself?  
What does *Yawning Man* represent?  
What does *Falling Dog* represent?  
Have you ever had a “falling dog” experience?

#### *Reflection Topic*

Write about how your thought process works.

### Questions on “Fat”

#### *Discussion Questions*

What type of language is being used in this story?  
How does the language contribute to the experience of reading the story?  
How would this story fit into a story map (with the five elements of a short story)?  
What elements are missing?  
How can this story be paralleled with Edward Hopper’s *NightHawks* (1942)?  
Did you like or dislike being forced to draw your own conclusions in this story?  
Would the story be as effective if it were written in formal English? Why or why not?

### ***Reflection Topic***

Discuss a time in your life when you were unable to verbalize what you were feeling.

Questions on “Lost in the Funhouse”

### ***Discussion Questions***

Define self-consciousness.

What age group often feels self-conscious?

How is this story an example of self-consciousness?

How does the story structure make you, the reader, feel?

Does it annoy or frustrate you?

Do you think all writers think about which elements they are using as they write?

Is it better to write spontaneously or concentrate on incorporating literary elements and proper grammar as you write?

What correlation can be drawn between “Lost in the Funhouse” and *Drawing Hands* by M.C. Escher? What about Norman Rockwell’s *Triple Self Portrait*?

Do you think Barth is poking fun at the “rules of writing” or just demonstrating how these rules can be employed within a story?

Do you think every story must follow a predetermined formula to be good?

### ***Reflection Topic***

Write about another work of art or literature that demonstrates self-consciousness. Or write your own piece in which you draw attention to your inner thoughts and the process you are using to create the work.

### **Questions on “The School”**

### ***Discussion Questions***

What type of language is being used?

Why do you think Barth chooses to write his story using this language?

What effect does this language have on the reader?

Can you relate to the death of a pet? A loved one?

What is the difference between the adult vs. the child’s view on death?

What do you think the message of the story is?

### ***Reflection Topic***

Do you agree with the narrator’s assertion that: ‘Life [not death] is that which gives meaning to life.’? Discuss why or why not.

Questions on the portrayal of family in Sully, Evergood, and Kafka

*Discussion Questions*

What are the similarities and differences in these three works?

Define idealism.

Define realism.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of realism? Idealism?

How does society often depict the ideal family? Give examples from stories, television, and film.

What are some examples of non-idealistic families in stories, television, and film?

What kind of family does Gregor Samsa have?

How would you react toward a family member who had suddenly transformed into a giant bug?

*Reflection Topic*

What human emotions does Kafka portray in *The Metamorphosis*? When have you experienced similar emotions in your own life?

Major Assignment

The object of this assignment is to use works that illustrate themes of alienation and stylistic rebellion as springboards for self-expression.

Choose one of the following topics. Your paper should be 3-5 pages typed, unless otherwise specified.

1. Compose a piece of writing in which you incorporate some of the innovative methods we have explored in class. Some examples are : stream of consciousness, typography, silence, use of atypical hero figures, and addressing the reader. You may, of course, invent your own unique methods. The final page of your paper will consist of self-reflective criticism that states the reasoning behind your method of presentation. For example, if you choose to write in stream of consciousness, you must be able to explain how that method of presentation contributes to the overall meaning/effect of the story. This is your chance to be a writing rebel! You may violate any and all the rules of writing, but your techniques must be purposeful.
2. Find your own piece of art that illustrates the theme of alienation and/or stylistic rebellion. In the first half of your paper, reflect on (summarize/describe) the content of your piece. In the second half, analyze the method of presentation. You may choose an example from literature, art, film, music, poetry, architecture, or photography.

3. Visually represent an alienistic concept. You may create a two-dimensional painting/drawing or a three-dimensional work. Choose from one of the following concepts: frustration, isolation, destruction, despair, confusion, discrimination, or any other topic approved by me. A one page written analysis explaining why you represented your concept the way you did must accompany your work.
4. Write a compare/contrast paper in which you parallel a piece of alienistic literature with a piece of art that illustrates the same concept. Focus on how the same concept can be manifested in different media.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Barth's stories interrupt the reader to draw attention to the writing process. "Frame Tale" is a three dimensional Mobious strip that can be fastened in such a way that the story never ends. "Title" and excerpts from "Lost in the Funhouse" will be also be analyzed.

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Barthelme's innovative writing strategies are revealed in this original collection. His stories reflect the randomness of real life. In "The Falling Dog," Barthelme portrays a Welsh sculptor whose most recent work entitled "Yawning Man" is renamed "The Falling Dog" after a dog literally falls on top of him from a high window.

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This book features a comprehensive collection of Escher's graphic illustrations, accompanied by descriptions of each piece written by the author.
- Escher, M.C. *MobiusStripII* (1963).  
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- Hopper, Edward. *Nighthawks* (1942) The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.  
<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/H/hopper/nighthwk.jpg.html>, (19 June, 2000).  
This painting of a bar with a few lonely customers at night can be examined in conjunction with Carver's "Fat."
- Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. Corngold, Stanley, trans. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1972.  
The main character's sudden transformation into a giant cockroach alienates him from his family and society.
- Mendelowitz, Daniel M. *A History of American Art*. New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960.  
This book categorizes art into time periods and art movements. It chronicles rebellious trends in art as well as architecture.
- Monroe, William. *Power to Hurt: The Virtues of Alienation*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

This book offers an analytical approach to the theme of alienation in literature. Monroe provides insight into the works of Barth and Barthelme and discusses “the capacity of the alienistic performer to renew and refresh” (128).

“Raymond Carver: 1938-1988.” *Gale Literary Databases*,  
<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/LRC>, (17 March 2000).

The paper is a literary analysis of Carver’s non-traditional approach to writing.

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Norman Rockwell draws attention to the role of the artist in this work.

Rothko, Mark. *Number 10* (1950). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Plate 29 of *A History of American Art*. By Daniel M. Mendelowitz. New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960.

This work represents a modern, non-traditional method of artistic expression.

Salvi, Nicola. *Trevi Fountain* (1732-1751). Rome.

<http://www.romanhomes.com/spanish-steps-trevi-quarter.htm> (19 June, 2000).

A classic Roman fountain to be contrasted with DuChamp’s *Fountain* (1917).

Sully, Thomas. *Mother and Son* (1840). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Plate 10 of *A History of American Art*. By Daniel M. Mendelowitz. New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960.

Sully depicts an elegant, romantic portrayal of a mother and son.