

Lesson 4: Reacting to Reactions

What's on for today and why: One of the most specific reasons that we read personal narratives is the wealth of emotion that is shown by the narrator as the story unfolds. A great way to get the students to understand this is for them to have their own reactions to the text and gain a deeper understanding of the emotion.

What to do:

- 1) First have the students make a list of emotions that they would associate with the novel (help them along if they miss any pertinent ones). Then point out the first paragraph on page 43 as well as the first paragraph on page 48, one by Carrie and the other by Faith.
- 2) Now have two students read each paragraph in a monotone, one then the other and have the rest of the class jot down how they feel hearing each paragraph read that way. Then using other students, or even the entire class sometimes, work your way down the list of emotions with the students jotting down their reactions along the way.
- 3) Now ask everyone to choose which emotion suited each speech the best and have them vote then perform the paragraphs in those emotions. Ask them why they chose these emotions and is there anyone who completely disagrees?
- 4) Read pages 53-71 in *A Woman's Place*. Please continue journals and concentrate on the students' responses to the narrators emotions, not just their responses to the text.

How did it go? Using Carrie and Faith may help the students get in to the reading a little more because they can relate to parent-child differences in opinion easily. You should have had some students who were really getting into the performing as well as some who felt very strongly about some of the emotions being performed. If you aren't getting that response, you might need to talk about getting into the emotions a little more. The point of performing is to have the students get into character and start to think about the underlying emotions in what they are reading. Having them note down their own reactions gets them thinking about their own

response to one of the most provocative aspects of reading personal narratives without being told that the narrative should be evoking emotions. This exercise should get the students to feel more connected to the novel and realize that the events in the story are made so much more important by how the student reacts to the narrators emotions.