



CONCEPTS
560 A N D
CULTURES

A Reader for Writers

MARTIN ITZKOWITZ

Concepts and Cultures

A Reader for Writers

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Rowan College of New Jersey

Allyn and Bacon

Boston London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore

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A Simon & Schuster Company
Needham Heights, Mass. 02194

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Concepts and cultures: a reader for writers / [edited by] Martin Itzkowitz.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-205-15279-1

1. College readers. 2. English language—Rhetoric.

I. Itzkowitz, Martin.

PE1417.C643 1995

808'.0427—dc20

94-28818

CIP



This textbook is printed on
recycled acid-free paper.

Acknowledgments

Chapter 1

Pliny, the Younger. "The Eruption of Vesuvius," reprinted by permission of the publishers and the Loeb Classical Library from *Pliny's Letters and Panegyrics*, Letters xvi and xx, trans. Betty Radice. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Acknowledgments continued on page 554, which constitutes an extension of the copyright page.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 97 96 95 94

Preface

Concepts and Cultures unites current pedagogic concerns with traditional writing principles. Using rhetorical patterns as guides, it introduces a wide range of readings from diverse cultures. Selections include work from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as writing by Americans and Europeans with varied backgrounds. Several pieces are cross-cultural (Sam Gill's "Disenchantment") or deal with an aspect of non-Western civilization (S. Robert Ramsey's "China, North and South"). Such material and selections from writers whose traditions differ from that of the Anglo-American mainstream comprise about a third of the readings.

Writing from the Western tradition blends the classical and the contemporary. Plato (*Crito*) and Pliny the Younger ("The Eruption of Vesuvius") are included, as are Doris Lessing ("The Sun Between Their Feet") and Susan Sontag ("TB and Cancer as Metaphor"). The abundance of unusual selections is complemented by a number of more familiar ones (Rachel Carson's "The Gray Beginnings," Desmond Morris's "Territorial Behaviour," and the Declaration of Independence) long established as useful in writing courses. Such diversity is also reflected in the multidisciplinary character of the writings, with the humanities and social sciences especially well represented.

References within the text are also eclectic, ranging from Georgia O'Keeffe and Angkor Wat to the Three Stooges and Axl Rose. The tone is often upbeat, conversational, even humorous at times, all in an effort to engage the student. Each introduction includes a section demonstrating the use of the rhetorical type in various academic disciplines and, by way of summary, a section guiding students in its use.

A novel feature of the apparatus is a group of provocative questions called "Considerations" that challenge students to consider, for themselves personally and for their culture(s), the implications of ideas, attitudes, or circumstances presented by the readings. In addition to encouraging such intimate and intellectual engagement, these questions regularly include related suggestions for writing—writing that is most often not pattern-specific, since this need is fulfilled by a supplementary list of suggested topics at chapter's end.

Given the inclusive nature of the selections here, it should not be surprising that several are translations. Many of these are by such widely recognized figures as Benjamin Jowett and Donald Keene, and all necessarily stand as examples of English prose in their own right. As a matter of chance

(and British colonialism), the readings from India and all but one from Africa are English originals.

The vast majority of readings here are presented in their entirety. In some instances, as in the pieces by Levi and Sontag, they are self-contained portions of longer works. In rare cases where deletions have been made, selections nevertheless retain their essential integrity. One of them, in fact, Twain's "The Lowest Animal," is regularly published in its present abbreviated form.

Two features of the rhetorical arrangement are unusual. Chapter 5 includes analogy with comparison-contrast. The rationale for this is twofold: first, analogy itself is a type of comparison, and second, it is rather too specialized a structural pattern to justify a separate chapter. Including analysis with division-classification in chapter 6 is perhaps more radical. The intellectual processes involved here are quite similar, however, as the discussion itself points out. In addition, like the arrangement in chapter 5, the fusion of strategies suggests that rhetorical patterns are interdependent.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Regardless of the single name that appears on the title page, this text is the result of the resources, energy, and encouragement of many others. Part of the writing and research was funded by grants awarded by the faculty and administration of Rowan College. My department head, David Cromie, provided convenient schedules that enabled me to work on the text in optimum blocks of time without compromising my teaching or other faculty responsibilities. Many other of my supportive colleagues regularly inquired about my progress.

Laura Kaighn was an eager and tireless research assistant in the early stages of the project, and M. Patricia Kemery helped greatly with correspondence, particularly in regard to securing permissions. My wife, Ann, worked on final manuscript preparation, my son Job on word processing, my son Seth—resident computer guru—on word processing and electronic troubleshooting.

To continue in a nepotistic vein, my brother Joel B. Itzkowitz of Wayne State University provided valuable comments on the headnotes to the Greek and Roman writers and clarified some points of translation. Advice and assistance on various matters, occasionally unwitting, were supplied by Jim Grace, Gary Hunter, Tom Kloskey, and Linda McMenamin, all of Rowan College.

Most of the research was conducted at the Van Pelt Library of the University of Pennsylvania and the Savitz Library at Rowan College. The staffs of both institutions were most helpful. I am particularly obliged to Karl Kahler of the Van Pelt Library for his recommendations in regard to the

treatment of Chinese and Japanese names. In addition, Toni Libro of Rowan College and Dan Walsh provided material from their personal libraries for my perusal and consideration.

Joseph Opiela, English editor for Allyn & Bacon, who showed great faith in the text from the start, helped me to guard against excesses in scope and style and (with the aid of his reviewers) to shape the text to the needs of its intended audience. His assistant, Brenda Conaway, provided ready answers to my many questions about the publication process and related procedures.

I am also indebted to the following reviewers for their suggestions and criticisms of the manuscript drafts: Christopher Burnham, New Mexico State University; Peter Carino, Indiana State University; Duncan Carter, Portland State University; Stephen Hahn, William Paterson College; Douglas Krienke, Sam Houston State University; William Lalicker, Murray State University; Joel Nydahl, Babson College; Eugene Young, Sam Houston State University; and Randy Woodland, University of Michigan.

To these people and to any others I might have inadvertently omitted I extend my deepest thanks.

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- CHARLES DARWIN **The Galapagos** 94

This archipelago is situated under the Equator, at a distance of between five and six hundred miles from the west coast of South America. It consists of five principal islands, and of several small ones. . . . They are all volcanic.

MARGARET MEAD A Day in Samoa 101

As the dawn begins to fall among the soft brown roofs and the slender palm trees stand out against a colourless, gleaming sea, lovers slip home from trysts beneath the palm trees or in the shadow of beached canoes. . . . Cocks crow, negligently, and a shrill-voiced bird cries from the breadfruit trees.

DYLAN THOMAS Quite Early One Morning 105

Quite early one morning in the winter in Wales, by the sea that was lying down still and green as grass after a night of tar-black howling and rolling, I went out of the house . . . to see if it was raining still, if the outhouse had been blown away, potatoes, shears, rat-killer, shrimpnets, and tins of rusty nails aloft in the wind, and if all the cliffs were left.

KHUSHWANT SINGH The Haunted Simla Road 111

Many years ago the bells of St. Crispin woke up the people of Mashobra on Sunday mornings. We threw open our windows and let the chimes flood into the room along with the sunlight. . . . The bells of St. Crispin do not toll any more.

DORIS LESSING The Sun Between Their Feet 114

Sacred beetles these, the sacred beetles of the Egyptians, holding the symbol of the sun between their busy stupid feet. Busy, silly beetles, mothering

*their ball of dung again and again up a mountain when a few minutes
march to one side would take them clear of it.*

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Fear is imminent as sound in the wind-swung bell.

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silent, bare,

Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie

Open unto the fields, and to the sky;

All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

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*A silence falls upon the great hall, and it is more terrible than Bontsha's has
ever been, and slowly the judge and the angels bend their heads in shame at
this unending meekness they have created on earth.*

MARIANNE MOORE **What There Is to See at the Zoo** 146

*Walking through the monkey house at the Bronx Zoo, we stop before the
cage of an orangutan as he jumps to his lead-pipe trapeze with half an
orange in one hand and a handful of straw in the other. He tucks the wisp
of hay under his neck and, lying on his back as contentedly as if at rest in a
hammock, sucks at the orange from time to time—an exhibition of
equilibrium that is difficult to account for.*

W. H. AUDEN **Musée des Beaux Arts** 151

*About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood*

*Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully
along. . . .*

JEAN LATHAM **Royal Feasts** 153

Edward I, a high-spirited and exuberant King, ordered for his Coronation Feast in Westminster, "380 oxen, 450 porkers, 430 sheep, 278 bacon hogs and 22,600 hens and capons." This gargantuan meal lasted for two weeks non-stop, and yet historians assure us that his court was not considered to be an especially lavish one.

ALEXANDER CALANDRA **Angels on a Pin** 158

I went to my colleague's office and read the examination question: "Show how it is possible to determine the height of a tall building with the aid of a barometer."

The student had answered: "Take the barometer to the top of the building, attach a long rope to it, lower the barometer to the street, and then bring it up, measuring the length of the rope. The length of the rope is the height of the building."

DESMOND M. TUTU **The Evils of Apartheid** 161

Once a Zambian and a South African, it is said, were talking. The Zambian then boasted about their Minister of Naval Affairs. The South African asked, "But you have no navy, no access to the sea. How then can you have a Minister of Naval Affairs?" The Zambian retorted, "Well, in South Africa you have a Minister of Justice, don't you?"

SAM GILL **Disenchantment** 168

A statue of the Buddha is placed before the initiate, whereupon it is broken and cast aside. The initiate is told, "We are throwing the Buddha to the dogs." It is, of course, the object of Zen to come to know the wisdom of the Buddha directly and not through doctrine or teachings, and this act of disenchantment with the image of the Buddha serves to shock the initiate into grasping the higher reality of the Buddha-nature.

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During the Ch'ing-li period (1041–1048) a commoner named Pi Sheng first invented . . . movable type. Each [piece of] type was made of moistened clay upon which was carved one Chinese character. The portion that formed the character was as thin as the edge of a small coin. The type was then hardened by fire and thus made permanent.

STEPHEN CRANE **The Upturned Face** 191

The two officers looked down close to their toes where lay the body of their comrade. The face was chalk-blue; gleaming eyes stared at the sky. . . .

Soon there was nothing to be seen but the chalk-blue face. Lean filled the shovel. "Good God," he cried to the adjutant. "Why didn't you turn him somehow when you put him in?"

RACHEL CARSON **The Gray Beginnings** 197

Beginnings are apt to be shadowy, and so it is with the beginnings of that great mother of life, the sea. . . . So if I tell here the story of how the young planet Earth acquired an ocean, it must be a story pieced together from many sources and containing whole chapters the details of which we can only imagine.

THEODORE ROETHKE **My Papa's Waltz** 206

*You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt.*

PRIMO LEVI **October 1944** 208

The SS man, in the fraction of a second between two successive crossings, with a glance at one's back and front, judges everyone's fate, and in turn gives the card to the man on his right or left, and this is the life or death of each of us.

CAMARA LAYE **The Wonders of Working in Gold** 216

The operation going on before my eyes was certainly the smelting of gold, yet something more than that: a magical operation that the guiding spirits could regard with favor or disfavor. That is why, all around my father, there was absolute silence and anxious expectancy.

W. S. MERWIN **Unchopping a Tree** 223

When all is ready the splintered trunk is lowered onto the splinters of the stump. This, one might say, is only the skeleton of the resurrection.

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As then we need sleep to live out our threescore and ten years, so we need death to live that life which we cannot outlive.

CHIEF SEATTLE *The Red Man and the White* 249

Your time of decay may be distant—but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend with friend, can not be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all.

ROBINSON JEFFERS *The Deer Lay Down Their Bones* 253

*The deer in that beautiful place
lay down their bones: I must wear mine.*

DOROTHY PARKER *The Waltz* 256

*Is that orchestra never going to stop playing? Or must this obscene travesty of a dance go on until hell burns out?
Oh, they're going to play another encore. Oh, goody.*

SANTHA RAMA RAU *On Learning to Be an Indian* 261

*"You mean I'm not supposed to be alone with any man until I decide I want to marry him?"
"I'm afraid that's right, as long as we stay in your grandmother's house."*

SUSAN SONTAG *TB and Cancer as Metaphor* 269

TB is a disease of time; it speeds up life, highlights it, spiritualizes it. In both English and French, consumption "gallops." Cancer has stages rather than gaits; it is (eventually) "terminal." Cancer works slowly, insidiously: the standard euphemism in obituaries is that someone has "died after a long illness."

S. ROBERT RAMSEY *China, North and South* 276

This remarkable linguistic difference between a unified North and a fragmented South is a measure of how much life and society have been affected by geography.

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Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy.

SIR FRANCIS BACON **Of Studies** 301

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, with diligence and attention.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE **The Seven Ages of Man** 305

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women, merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His Acts being seven ages.*

MARIA LUISA BOMBAL **Sky, Sea and Earth** 308

I am familiar with an infinite number of tiny and magical secrets from the sea and from the earth. . . .

The sky, on the other hand, does not have even one small and tender secret. Im placable, it completely unfurls its terrifying map above us.

DESMOND MORRIS **Territorial Behaviour** 312

A territory is a defended space. In the broadest sense, there are three kinds of human territory: tribal, family, and personal.

JOHN S. MBITI **The African Concept of Time** 321

Instead of numerical calendars there are what one would call phenomenon calendars. . . . The day, the month, the year, one's life time or human history, are all divided up or reckoned according to their specific events, for it is these that make them meaningful.

RAYMOND CHANG AND MARGARET SCROGIN CHANG **Four Treasures of the Study** 332

The Oriental calligrapher has four basic tools, called "Four Treasures of the Study." They are brush, ink, inkstone, and paper. The first three have

certainly been used since the Shang dynasty (ca. 1766–ca. 1122 B.C.), most likely even earlier.

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YOSHIDA KENKŌ *On Drinking* 354

Buddha taught that a man who takes liquor and forces another to drink will be reborn five hundred times without hands.

Though liquor is as loathsome as I have described it, there are naturally some occasions when it is hard to dispense with.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS *Learning to Read* 357

I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom.

EMILY DICKINSON *After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes* 363

After great pain, a formal feeling comes—

The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs—

SADEQ HEDAYAT *David the Hunchback* 365

Impulsively he said, "Are you lonely, miss? I too am lonely. I am always lonely. My whole life long I have been lonely."

MAURICE SHADBOLT *Who Killed the Bog Men of Denmark? And Why?* 371

Who had killed these men of the bogs? Why in winter, or early spring?

Why should they—apparently—have led privileged lives? And why the same kind of meals before their sudden ends?

STANLEY MILGRAM **The Dilemma of Obedience** 375

A person comes to a psychological laboratory and is told to carry out a series of acts that come increasingly into conflict with conscience. The main question is how far the participant will comply with the experimenter's instructions before refusing to carry out the actions required of him.

BETH L. BAILEY **Calling Cards and Money** 385

Born primarily of the limits and opportunities of urban life, dating had almost completely replaced the old system of calling by the mid-1920s—and, in so doing, had transformed American courtship.

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The Role of Women: Two Ancient Views 413LIU HSIANG **The Mother of Mencius** 413

"A woman's duty is not to control or take charge. Instead she must follow the 'three submissions.' When she is young, she must submit to her parents. After her marriage, she must submit to her husband. When she is widowed, she must submit to her son."

A Virtuous Woman 415

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

JACOB BRONOWSKI **The Reach of Imagination** 417

I have described imagination as the ability to make images and to move them about inside one's head in new arrangements. This is the faculty that is specifically human, and it is the common root from which science and literature both spring and grow and flourish together.