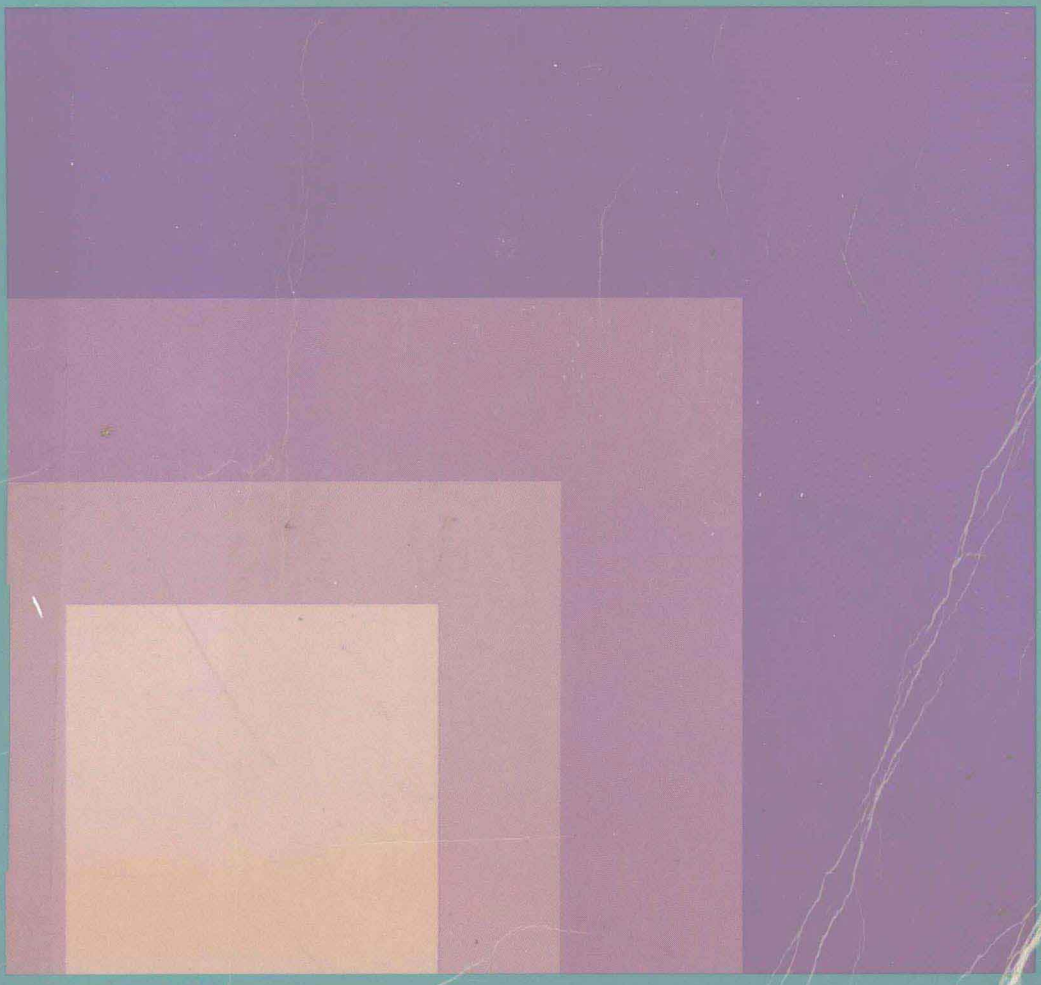
READING FOR RECOGNITION

RUTH EISENBERG AND CAROL SWIDORSKI



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TO OUR PARENTS

with love and recognition

TO THE TEACHER

What does the college freshman want to read in a collection of essays? What does the English teacher hope to achieve with the student in his reading? These are the two basic questions the editors of this collection used to govern their choices and to govern their approaches to the material once it had been chosen.

Cynics may answer the first question negatively. We disagree. We feel the student wants to read material with a high interest factor, material that communicates a sense of immediacy, and material that makes him more conversant with some of the great and important names and issues.

To this general end, we have chosen essays that apply to or comment on problems of the contemporary world, but are not so of-the-moment that they immediately date themselves. The hippie movement is passé now, and Haight-Ashbury just another problem neighborhood; race and violence are basic issues in our society.

To engage interest, we have used much humor; about twenty percent of the articles fall into the wide range of humorous writing. Almost one-quarter of the contents utilize literary illustration or narrative because they are highly readable. Many of the articles are brief; they make their succinct point and quit. Finally, the list of authors is, we think, impressive, and we invite you to look over the Contents.

The second question—what English teachers hope to achieve—is more complex than the mere enjoyment of a text. Better reading, better thinking, and better writing are usually the ultimate goals; the apparatus that accompanies the articles is geared to those ends.

The purpose of each introduction is to supply the reader with an orientation and a perspective. Each gives some pertinent data on the writer, while some indicate the source of the material. "To the Reader" offers hints so the student can read more rapidly and with fuller comprehension because he will have some idea of what to read for.

While the questions are intended to help the reader, they may also be used to guide class discussion. In almost every essay, the first question seeks the theme since it is the conviction of the editors that reading for the main idea is the most important kind of reading. The questions that follow help reveal the thinking of the essayist in the development of his main points. The final questions point up the form, technique, and style of the essay or essayist. The student is asked to find, recognize, and sometimes analyze rhetorical or stylistic devices.

To aid vocabulary development, two techniques have been employed. There is a vocabulary list at the end of each essay that requires such a list. More significantly perhaps, throughout the essay, any word that seemed critical to an intelligent reading is defined in a footnote.

Following the questions and vocabulary are discussion and writing topics that may be used in the classroom or as broad starting points for themes. Some topics allow personal reflection; others require research.

"Cross References" leads the student to other essays in the collection that deal with related subject matter. "Recommended Reading" refers the interested student to related essays, books, and plays beyond the collection.

Though the book has been planned as a unit from Prologue to Epilogue, it need not be used that way. To facilitate handling, we have devised a double Contents. The thematic approach is described in the foreword "To The Student." The Rhetorical

Contents is primarily for the teacher's use. There is occasionally overlapping and duplication in distribution of the titles; that is because some pieces fill more than one category. For example, Schwartz can be taught, rhetorically, for analysis, classification, or tone; Kennedy, for argument or diction. Sometimes, too, an argumentative piece is developed largely via a particular expository technique. If, at times, you disagree with the editors and want to argue their decision, that is quite okay; we argued between ourselves often.

Good writers and good writing: these are what the book presents. Reading for enjoyment, stimulation, and emulation is what we hope it will accomplish.

White Plains, N.Y.
Yonkers, N.Y.

January 1969

Ruth F. Eisenberg
Carol J. Swidorski

TO THE STUDENT

The student on the brink of recognition of himself and the world is the individual to whom this book is addressed. Faced with responsibility, the need for achievement, and desire for commitment, he is apt to find the world large and chaotic—in many ways overwhelming.

This book will not bring total recognition, but it will heighten individual awareness. It offers material through which the student can gain a broader perspective of the world, a world that surely needs improvement. Self-understanding and the understanding of other people are two basic ingredients to any betterment. This is basic to the view of Eric Sevareid's essay "The Dark of the Moon," which has provided the theme for this book.

The collection opens with "Public Issues," essays that examine our world and a few of its problems: what it is to be a man and an American; what it is to face the dilemmas of democracy, race, violence, dope, individualism. While all the problems

are serious, not all the material is; laughter sometimes brings special insights.

The second section, "The Heart of Man," introduces some people, well-known and unknown, who make up our world—the lives of some of whom have, directly or indirectly, affected ours, whether or not we realize it.

The third section of the book, "Controlling the Earth from the Earth," explores man's mind: the mechanics of thinking; the relation of words to thought; the expansion of man's capacity to think and feel by the creative use of his mind, his talents, and his leisure.

With this broader perspective, the serious student is often spurred to look more deeply at particularly bothersome problems. Two of the most pressing problems of our time, both personal and public, are dissent and violence. Each of these issues is explored in "Two Private Issues" via historical commentary and contemporary thought. Then particular dilemmas are argued: dissent—how much free speech is too much? violence—how violent is our society?

The book closes with "The Hope and the Reassurance," six essays of idealism. Each is by a man whose thinking has profoundly affected the world. Each man, in turn, reflects optimism about the innate capacity of mankind for moral achievement, responsible action, and love—collectively, the highest realizations of awareness or self-recognition.

White Plains, N. Y. — Ruth F. Eisenberg
Yonkers, N. Y. — Carol J. Swidorski

January 1969

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