

**THE
CONTEMPORARY
READER
FROM
LITTLE, BROWN**
SECOND EDITION

Edited by

Gary Goshgarian

THE CONTEMPORARY READER FROM LITTLE, BROWN

SECOND EDITION

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Northeastern University



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Andrew Ward, "They Also Wait Who Stand and Serve Themselves," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1979. Copyright © 1979 by The Atlantic Monthly Company, Boston, Mass. Reprinted with permission.

Gerald W. Bracey, "The World in Bits and Pieces," *Newsweek*, October 28, 1985. Copyright 1985, by Newsweek, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted by Permission.

Credits and Acknowledgments continue on p. 420.

TO THE STUDENT

If we are to make THE CONTEMPORARY READER FROM LITTLE, BROWN a better book next time, we must know what students think of what we've already done. Please help us by filling out this questionnaire and returning it to Little, Brown and Company, College Edition, 34 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108.

School: _____ Course title: _____

Instructor's name: _____

Other required texts: _____

Tell us what you think about the readings.

	Liked best				Liked least	Did not read
Ward, "They Also Wait Who Stand and Serve Themselves"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Bracey, "The World in Bits and Pieces"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Fergus, "When Litening Strikes"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Schoenstein, "The Modern Mount Rushmore"	5	4	3	2	1	___
White, "Once More to the Lake"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Reese and Abramson, "Homosexuality: One Family's Affair"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Williams, "Daddy Tucked the Blanket"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Spock, "A Way to Say Farewell"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Weltner, "Stripping Down to Bare Happiness"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Baker, "In My Day . . ."	5	4	3	2	1	___
Kratcoski, "What Did Kids Do Before Television Was Invented?"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Winn, "The Plug-In Drug"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Boyd, "Packaged News"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Newsweek, "MTV's Message"	5	4	3	2	1	___
O'Rourke, "Why I Quit Watching Television"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Greenfield, "Don't Blame TV"	5	4	3	2	1	___
O'Neill, "The Language of Advertising"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Will, "Printed Noise"	5	4	3	2	1	___
White, "Resisting Those Awful Commercials"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Arlen, "Ring Around the Collar!"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Rettie, "But a Watch in the Night: A Scientific Fable"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Eiseley, "How Natural Is Natural?"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Thomas, "Man's Role on Earth"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Finch, "Snowy"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Dyer, "A Cruel Universe, but the Only One Where Humans Could Exist"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Gould, "Were Dinosaurs Dumb?"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Wouk, "Must Wars Occur?"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Schell, "The Effects of a Nuclear Explosion"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Kinsley, "Nuclear Holocaust in Perspective"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Sagan, "Star Wars: The Leaky Shield"	5	4	3	2	1	___
Mackintosh, "Masculine/Feminine"	5	4	3	2	1	___

Raspberry, "Homemaking"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Friedan, "How to Get the Women's Movement Moving Again"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Perrin, "The Androgynous Male"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Barry, "Deliver Us from the Delivery"	5	4	3	2	1	—
McManus, "The Backpacker"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Quinn, "The Jeaning of America—and the World"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Jordan, "That Lean and Hungry Look"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Palmer, "What Pop Lyrics Say to Us"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Morrow, "It's Time to Ban Handguns"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Goldwater, "Why Gun Control Laws Don't Work"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Royko, "A Lesson Taught on the Subway"	5	4	3	2	1	—
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Smith, "Abortion, Right and Wrong"	5	4	3	2	1	—
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Cousins, "Unwed Mothers in America"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Maranto, "Coke: The Random Killer"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Eldredge, "Creationism Isn't Science"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Wainwright, "A Little Banning Is a Dangerous Thing"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Morrow, "If Slang Is Not a Sin"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Lawrence, "Four-Letter Words Can Hurt"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Jones, "What's Wrong with Black English"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Safire, "Bizbuzz"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Baker, "Little Red Riding Hood Revisited"	5	4	3	2	1	—
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Schrank, "Sport and the American Dream"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Keillor, "Attitude"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Parker, "On the Bench"	5	4	3	2	1	—
Angell, "On the Ball"	5	4	3	2	1	—
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1. Are there any contemporary topics not covered that you would like to see included?

2. What magazines do you read regularly? _____

3. May we quote you in our promotional efforts for this book? _____

Date

Signature

*This book is dedicated to my sons,
Nathan and David*

PREFACE

When the first edition of the *The Contemporary Reader* was published in 1984, it was the only such reader on the college market. There were dozens of Freshman Comp anthologies around, full of bearded standards such as Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant," and Thucydides' "Corcyraen Revolution," but there wasn't a single collection of contemporary essays that students could relate to—essays that were both well written and that could light the student fire.

Despite the obvious hole in the market, the first edition was still something of an experiment, but years of experience told us that students perform best when their own interests are addressed. We were certain that there was a need for a *Contemporary Reader*—a collection containing essays specifically selected for their interest and accessibility to college students, essays that talked about the time and culture students were part of, and, of course, essays that inspired thought, stimulated class discussion, and served as writing models.

From the enthusiastic response to the first edition, the experiment was clearly a success. This second edition reflects that enthusiasm.

New to the second edition

The Contemporary Reader must by its very nature be kept current. Therefore, I have made some major changes at the suggestion of instructors and students who used the first edition. Each of the thirteen areas has been updated and strengthened. Dated material and readings that no longer seemed to meet the needs of students and instructors have been dropped, and I have added essays on subject matters new to the collection: the effects of MTV, the Star Wars controversy, the message of current rock music, the dangers of cocaine, homosexuality, divorce, heroes and heroines of today's generation, and religious faith. I have added a section, "On Contemporary Language," which includes essays on current slang, taboo language, jargon, and Black English. In fact, I have added some thirty new essays, nearly all of which were published since the previous edition.

The Contemporary Reader, 2/e, contains seventy-three essays, only a handful of which were written before 1980. Those few are classic pieces by prose masters such as E. B. White and James Thurber that are as fresh today as they were when written.

About the Essays

Diversity

The second edition still reflects the wide range of experiences students can identify with: television, advertising, the media, sports, the natural world, abortion, the nuclear threat, dating, sexual roles, the latest fads, jogging, gun control, weight control, drug abuse, capital punishment, teenage pregnancy, religious conversion, death and dying, and more. The writers are as diverse as their subjects: Betty Friedan, Loren Eiseley, Martin Luther King, Jr., Michael Arlen, and Roger Angell, as well as such familiar humorists as Andy Rooney, Russell Baker, Art Buchwald, Mike Royko, Dave Barry, Patrick F. McManus, and William Safire.

Many of the authors are well-known professional editors or columnists such as Ellen Goodman, William Raspberry, George F. Will, Diane White, Norman Cousins, Jeff Greenfield, Gwynne Dyer, Michael Kinsley, Robert Palmer, Lance Morrow, and Loudon Wainwright. Noted scientists

and prize-winning authors are represented by Carl Sagan, Lewis Thomas, Stephen Jay Gould, and Dr. Benjamin Spock.

Also included are previously unanthologized essays by some of the most popular novelists writing today—Robert B. Parker, Herman Wouk, Garrison Keillor, Nora Ephron, and Dan Wakefield.

The writing styles and techniques are equally diverse. Contained in this collection are examples of the “basic” essay as well as editorials, satirical narratives, parodies, news reports, journal entries, descriptive narratives, pointed arguments, commercial ads, and more. They vary in length from 500 to 2500 words.

Debates

Essays on controversial topics are a special feature of *The Contemporary Reader*. As in the first edition, many contemporary issues are confronted from opposing points of view. Most of the thirteen sections contain a debate. They might be indirect as in Part 3, “On Television,” where Jeff Greenfield’s article “Don’t Blame TV” argues against some of the preceding viewpoints on the dangers of television. Sometimes the arguments meet head-on, as do Mike Royko’s and William Raspberry’s opposing interpretations of the well-known Bernhard Goetz subway shooting (in the “Conscience and Controversy” section). And sometimes writers make direct assaults on each other, as in Part 6, “War and Peace in the Nuclear Age,” where Michael Kinsley’s “Nuclear Holocaust in Perspective” attacks Jonathan Schell’s stand in “The Effects of a Nuclear Explosion” as well as the nuclear freeze movement.

Debates can be found in nonissue sections as well, such as in Part 4, “On Advertising,” which contrasts some barbed attacks on TV commercials back to back with a cogent defense of familiar ads by professional advertiser Charles O’Neill.

Humor

There is no reason why the writing experience should not be fun, nor is there any reason why writing models cannot be entertaining. Many of the selections are very funny and entertaining, and in their humor they have much to say. Nearly every section contains some humorous pieces. Even Part 6, “War and Peace in the Nuclear Age,” concludes with Art Buchwald’s satirical narrative, “Evacuating the Capital? No Need to Hurry Now.”

Advertisements

Because of the strong response to the magazine ads in the section “On Advertising,” we have included a new batch of recently run ads with specific questions to help students closely analyze how advertising works on us—and to spark some lively class discussions.

Apparatus

This book is not just a collection of interesting thoughts on contemporary experience. The selections offer varied but solid assistance to composition students trying to develop their own writing abilities. First, all the essays were written by professionals, thus they serve as models of many different expository techniques and patterns. Second, each selection is preceded by a headnote containing thematic and biographic information as well as clues to writing techniques and strategies. Third, each piece is followed by a series of review questions covering both thoughts and themes ("Topical Considerations") and compositional features ("Rhetorical Considerations"). These questions are designed to stimulate class discussion and to aid students in analyzing the form and content of the essays. There are also some suggested writing assignments to help students relate the essays to others and to their own experiences. I have also included a Rhetorical Table of Contents in this edition.

Instructor's Manual

An *Instructor's Manual* for this second edition of *The Contemporary Reader from Little, Brown* is available from the publisher. Instructors wishing to obtain a complimentary copy of the manual may address their requests (on school letterhead) to College Marketing, Little, Brown and Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108.

Acknowledgments

Many people behind the scenes are at the very least deserving of thanks and acknowledgment for their help with developing the second edition. It is impossible to thank all of them, but there are some for whose help I am particularly grateful. I would like to thank those instructors who answered lengthy questionnaires on the effectiveness of the essays and supplied many helpful comments and suggestions. Annette Adair, Yvonne J. Milspaw, Patricia L. Rottmund, Jon W. Tarrant, Carolyn L. Williams, and Gwen Yackee of Harrisburg Area Community College; Nancy Bent, Ithaca College; Michael Berberich, University of Nevada, Reno; Roberta Bothwell, Erie Community College; Cynthia Butos and Elizabeth Marafino, Tunxis Community College; Dorothy Cook, Wayne Cook, and Robert Spiegel, Central Connecticut State University; Terence A. Dalrymple and Kathleen Holcomb, Angelo State University; Patricia Harker and Bill Scarpaci, Rock Valley College; Bruce Hoffman, Rockland Community College; Marilyn Monaghan, Gwynedd-Mercy College; James Pictor, Saint Francis College; Charles Reinhart, Vincennes Univer-

sity; Roberta Simone, Grand Valley State College; and Nancy Sprehe, Kansas State University.

A special thanks goes out to my colleague Prof. Guy Rotella and to Prof. Michele Souda of Harvard University for their good suggestions of new material.

I am also enormously grateful to all the instructors and students who used the First Edition of *The Contemporary Reader from Little, Brown*.

To the people of Little, Brown and Company, especially my good editor and friend, Carolyn Potts, her assistant, Amy Johnson, and the indefatigable permissions editor Carolyn Woznick, I extend my warm appreciation for constant support.

I am indebted to Deirdre Dupree who assisted me greatly in preparing the manuscript.

Finally, to my wife Kathleen for her help and insight, her patience and encouragement, once again—my deepest thanks.

Gary Goshgarian

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