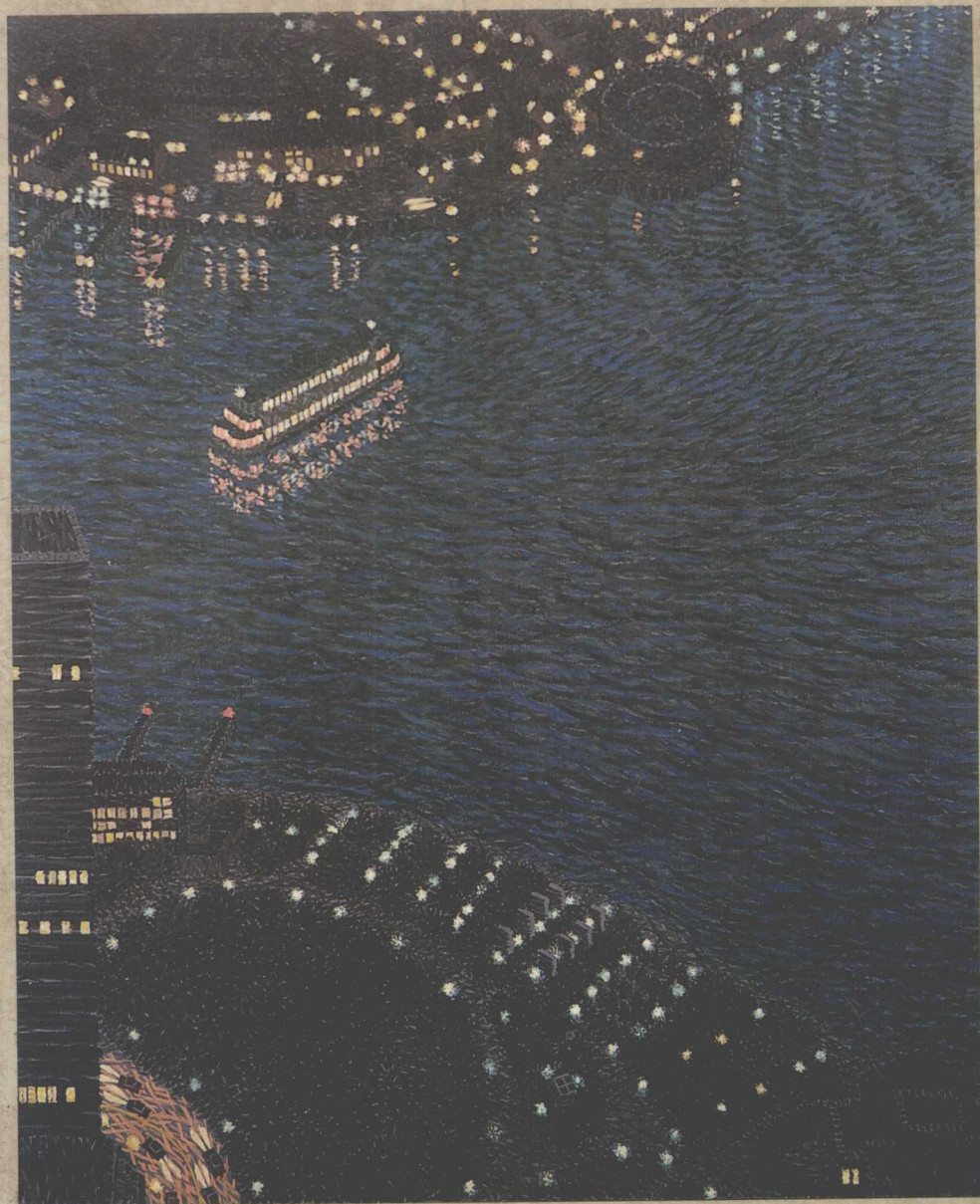


Henry Knepler/Myrna Knepler Second Edition

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Crossing Cultures

Readings for Composition



Crossing Cultures

Readings for Composition

Second Edition

Henry Knepler

Illinois Institute
of Technology

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Myrna Knepler

Northeastern
Illinois University

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**For
Elizabeth,
Elinor, and
Anne**

Preface

The second edition of *Crossing Cultures* contains fifteen new selections. Thematically, the basic idea remains unchanged: *Crossing Cultures* treats the diverse ways in which men and women live and think in different societies and social circumstances. The selections discuss the origins of that diversity and, more importantly, its consequences for our lives, particularly in the United States. Examples of encounters between people of differing life styles accomplish this most effectively.

It is safe to say that American awareness of cultural differences and their consequences remains on the rise. Within the United States, for example, the debate concerning bilingual education has risen in intensity since the first edition of this book; therefore, we have now included selections bearing on that topic. At the same time, Americans are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to interact with the rest of the world—with the recognition, in fact, that economics and politics make it impossible for us not to interact. In the mid-1980s, 2½ million Americans work abroad, and more than 4 million travel abroad on business every year.

As teachers we have found that such cross-cultural subjects work well in a composition course. They have a powerful impact on students; they challenge accepted beliefs by asking students to consider the lives, ideas, aspirations—and prejudices—of people very different from themselves. In addition, reading, and having one's classmates read, selections related to one's own culture heightens self-assurance and stimulates ethnic pride. When we are challenged "where we live," we are much more likely to want to express ourselves

forcefully, and to marshal our arguments with care, resulting in better writing.

Personal narratives are one of the chief strengths of *Crossing Cultures*. This remains the case in the second edition, even though, on the advice of various users, we have increased the number and diversity of expository selections. First person narratives are the kind of writing that students, even those who think they have “nothing to say,” will find easiest to carry through successfully. Such students can begin their college writing tasks with what they know best—their own experiences—and then move on to expository and persuasive modes. A number of the narratives we have included work well for those students making transitions to less personal rhetorical forms; for that reason we have cross-listed these selections in the Rhetorical Contents. Even the fictional selections included in the book, and the four brief poems, have expository or persuasive significance.

Cross-cultural readings have an additional advantage: they make students aware that whatever writing they do will be for an audience. This awareness, as composition teachers know, is difficult for beginning college writers to achieve. The confrontation with different lives, experiences, and points of view, and the felt necessity to communicate about them, are strong incentives for the student to reach out and become conscious of the possible gap between the writer's intentions and the reader's response to them.

In one way or another, all the sixty-three selections in the book relate to the overall cross-cultural theme, but we chose them first of all because we found them stimulating, interesting, and provocative. The selections vary considerably in length and complexity. The first edition of the book is being used in colleges that vary greatly from each other, ranging from a community college with relatively open admissions to an honors course at a major private university. Taking this diversity into consideration, we have continued to include both relatively straightforward selections as well as more complex ones, in order to give choices to the instructor. Several selections, used in conjunction with each other, present divergent or contrastive views on the same topic, and many of these combinations provide possibilities for more challenging assignments.

Crossing Cultures has been reorganized in nine parts to make it more coherent thematically. Each part begins with an introduction that explains its theme and briefly introduces each selection. The headnote that precedes each selection includes biographical information on the author and, when appropriate, refers the reader to other works of interest by the writer. All prose selections are then followed by Exercises, which consist of four sections designed to help or direct the reader. “Words to Know” contains a comprehensive list of the words some students may have difficulty with and may want to look

up in a dictionary; the list also includes proper nouns and translations of words and phrases in a foreign language. "Some of the Issues" is concerned with the content of the selection and consists of questions that review the student's understanding of the text. "The Way We Are Told" is designed to help students recognize the nature of the choices that writers make; here the questions and exercises lead the student to an examination of the writer's strategies to reach and hold an audience. The final section, "Some Subjects for Essays," suggests several writing assignments related either to the theme or the rhetorical mode of the selection. Asterisks indicate questions and essay topics that draw on several selections.

Some users of the first edition have been of great help to us in revising the book for this second edition, and we are grateful to them. They are of course in no way responsible for the end result. Among them are Julia Alvarez, George Washington University; Evelyn Avery, Towson State University; Dale Marie Bauer, Franklin and Marshall College; Susan Feinberg, Neal W. Kramer, and Barbara E. Plampin, Illinois Institute of Technology; Raymond Hedin, Indiana University; Deborah H. Holdstein, Governors State University; Cori Jones, Thomas E. Valasek, and Carroll L. Wilson, Somerset County College; Mary Klages, Stanford University; Lois Marchino, University of Texas at El Paso; Gerard O'Connor, University of Lowell; Michael Shuval, Cabrillo College; and Elena Yepes-Sauceda, East Los Angeles College. We are grateful to Ann Hayes for her suggestions and to James T. Nardin for his encouragement. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the help we received from our editor at Macmillan, Eben W. Ludlow, and his assistant, Tucker Jones. The production of the manuscript was, like that of the first edition, in the expert hands of Patricia Cabeza.

H.K.

M.K.

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