A WORL of IDEAS

ESSENTIAL READINGS FOR COLLEGE WRITERS



Lee A. Jacobus

Third Edition

A World of Ideas

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LEE A. JACOBUS

University of Connecticut

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ESSENTIAL READINGS FOR COLLEGE WRITERS

ALSO WRITTEN OR EDITED BY LEE A. JACOBUS

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PREFACE

When I describe this book to friends, I often say that it includes selections from Plato, Aristotle, Darwin, Wollstonecraft, Douglass, Freud, and no one less important. Although that is a mild exaggeration, it is very close to the truth. When the first edition of A World of Ideas was published, the notion that students in first-year composition courses ought to be able to read and write about challenging works by great thinkers was a radical one. I expected that the choice of selections in this book would appeal to a small minority of people who, like me, regard the first college composition course as a chance (for too many students, alas, the only chance) to introduce some of the significant ideas of our culture. To my delight, there were more of us than I had thought, and each year our ranks appear to be swelling.

All of the selections in this volume are of the highest quality. Each was chosen for its importance, range of thought, and capacity to sustain discussion and stimulate good writing. Unlike most composition anthologies that include such figures, this one does not offer two pages of Bacon, four pages of Kuhn, and a page-and-a-half of Aristotle. Instead, every writer is represented by as complete a selection as is practicable, averaging about fifteen pages in length. The selections are not edited to fit, but instead all of the arguments are developed completely as the authors wrote them. Developing a serious idea takes time. Most

students respect the fact that the further you read in the work of an important thinker, the better is your grasp of its ideas.

New in This Edition

All of the more than one hundred instructors who responded to questionnaires about the second edition wanted the book improved—but no one wanted it changed. This presented me with a pleasant dilemma. Those instructors who had written to tell me that they were still successfully teaching selections from the first edition will be pleased that some of those favorites have returned. Many users of the book wrote to suggest that more women writers be included, an intention of mine already. With the addition of four new selections to this edition, there are more women represented than ever before. The inclusion of selections from Asian thinkers also makes the book more truly representative of the "world" of ideas.

The third edition now contains thirty-six readings, with twelve of them new and two restored from the first edition. The new authors include Loren Eiseley, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mary Daly, Lao-Tzu, José Ortega y Gasset, Lucretius, Marcus Aurelius, St. Augustine, Simone de Beauvoir, and Siddhārtha Gautama, the Buddha. New selections were chosen to represent John Maynard Keynes and Carl Jung. Restored authors include Friedrich Nietzsche and Mary Wollstonecraft.

The readings in each part of the book now focus on broad questions of timeless importance, such as Part One's "Must the need for a stable social order conflict with the need for individual liberty?" These questions, which in some form or other we have all put to ourselves, provide an interrogative context from which students can approach the selections and understand areas of connection among them. The universality of these questions reflects and emphasizes the enduring significance of the selections themselves. Finally, the coverage of critical reading has been expanded by two sections on evaluating ideas and writing about ideas.

A Text for Readers and Writers

Introductions to Evaluating and Writing About Ideas. "Evaluating Ideas: An Introduction to Critical Reading" concentrates on techniques that students can use to make the ideas of great thinkers mean-

ingful. Because this is, and always has been, a reader for writers, I try to emphasize ways in which the text can be read in order to develop ideas for writing. The best method for developing such ideas is annotating the text carefully—establishing both a dialogue with the text as well as a system for retrieving ideas formulated during that dialogue. In this section, I offer an example of a portion of Machiavelli's essay on "The Qualities of the Prince" in an annotated form. The annotations are discussed for their own usefulness and for techniques by which similar annotations can be developed while reading other essays in the book. Annotation is the key to critical reading.

At the back of the book, "Writing About Ideas: An Introduction to Rhetoric" explains how a reader can apply the procedures of annotation in order to perform the critical thinking that results in a good written response to the ideas in any of the selections in the book. This section relies on the annotations of the Machiavelli selection expounded in "Evaluating Ideas: An Introduction to Critical Reading." A sample essay on Machiavelli, using all of the techniques taught in the context of reading and writing, gives students an idea of how they might write their own material. In addition, this section helps students understand how they can put to work some of the basic rhetorical principles discussed throughout the book.

Introductions for Each Selection. Each selection is preceded by a detailed introduction to the life and work of the author, as well as comments about the selection's primary ideas. The most interesting rhetorical achievements of the selection are also identified and discussed, with an eye toward helping the student discover how rhetorical techniques can achieve specific effects. These essays all offer useful models for writing: Douglass and Eiseley representing narrative; Machiavelli and Darwin, example; Bacon and Daly, enumeration; Kuhn, cause and effect. They are the kinds of models that beginning writers find useful: models of thought and models of structure—in other words, the materials of invention and arrangement.

Suggestions for Discussion and Writing. At the end of each essay is a group of discussion questions designed for use inside or outside the classroom. While they focus on key issues and ideas, they are also designed to stimulate a general discussion. Suggestions for writing that help the student practice some of the rhetorical strategies employed by the author follow. These suggestions range from personal responses to complete essays that involve research and comparison or contrast with other essays in the anthology.

Instructor's Manual. I have also prepared an extensive manual, Resources for Teaching A World of Ideas, that contains further background on the selections, examples from my own classroom responses to the authors, and more suggestions for classroom discussion as well as student writing assignments. A sentence outline for each selection has been carefully prepared by Carol Verburg and Ellen Troutman and can be photocopied and handed out to students. The idea came from Darwin's own phrase outlines preceding each chapter of On the Origin of Species. These outlines may be used to go over the more difficult selections. A sentence outline offers guidance for the cautious student. At the end of the manual, I have provided brief bibliographies for all thirty-six authors. These bibliographies can be photocopied and distributed to those students who wish to explore the primary selections in more depth.

Acknowledgments

One of the most helpful suggestions for revising this edition came from Michael Bybee at the University of Oregon. He was so concerned that I include Asian thinkers in this edition that he sent me many fascinating pieces to read, all of which he had taught to his own students in conjunction with the second edition. As a result of our mutual concern, the third edition contains two important selections, one by Lao-Tzu, and another by Siddhārtha Gautama, the Buddha, as interpreted by Buddhist monks.

An Asian-American student had also written to encourage me to include such pieces. One of my student contacts from the People's Republic of China spent a year at the University of Connecticut, using the second edition in his work with American students. He is now translating the book into Chinese for publication in China and plans to use it to teach university classes in Shanghai.

This edition, like its predecessors, is especially indebted to those at Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press who lavished a great deal of care and attention on every detail: Charles H. Christensen, Joan E. Feinberg, Elizabeth M. Schaaf, my editor Steve Scipione, Mary Lou Wilshaw, Kathryn Blatt, Jane Betz, Sarah Royston, Constance Mayer, and Paula Spencer. I want to thank Anatoly Dverin, Lyrl Ahem, and Bill Ogden of PC & F, Incorporated, for their wonderful portraits, which have added a special human touch to the book. I also want to thank the students—quite a few of them—who wrote me directly about their experience reading the first two editions. I have paid attention to all

that they said and I am warmed by their regard for the high quality of the material in this book.

Among the professors who respect quality and who were immensely generous with their criticism and praise, the following provided me with detailed recommendations for improving this and the second edition. A good number of them have spoken with me personally about their experiences with the book. I only hope they feel that their efforts were worthwhile. These people are Victoria Aarons, Trinity University; E. Abdon, Community College of Allegheny County; Susan Albertine, St. Olaf College; Stephen E. Alford, Nova College; Le Roy E. Annis, University of Puget Sound; Vern Bailey, Carleton College; Craig Barrow, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga; John Batty-Sylvan, City College of San Francisco: Stephen Bauer, College of New Rochelle; Adrian Beaudoin, Florida Junior College; L. Bensel-Meyers, University of Tennessee; Helle Bering-Jensen, Tufts University; Boyd U. Berry, Virginia Commonwealth University; Thomas N. Biuso, Colby-Sawyer College; C. S. 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