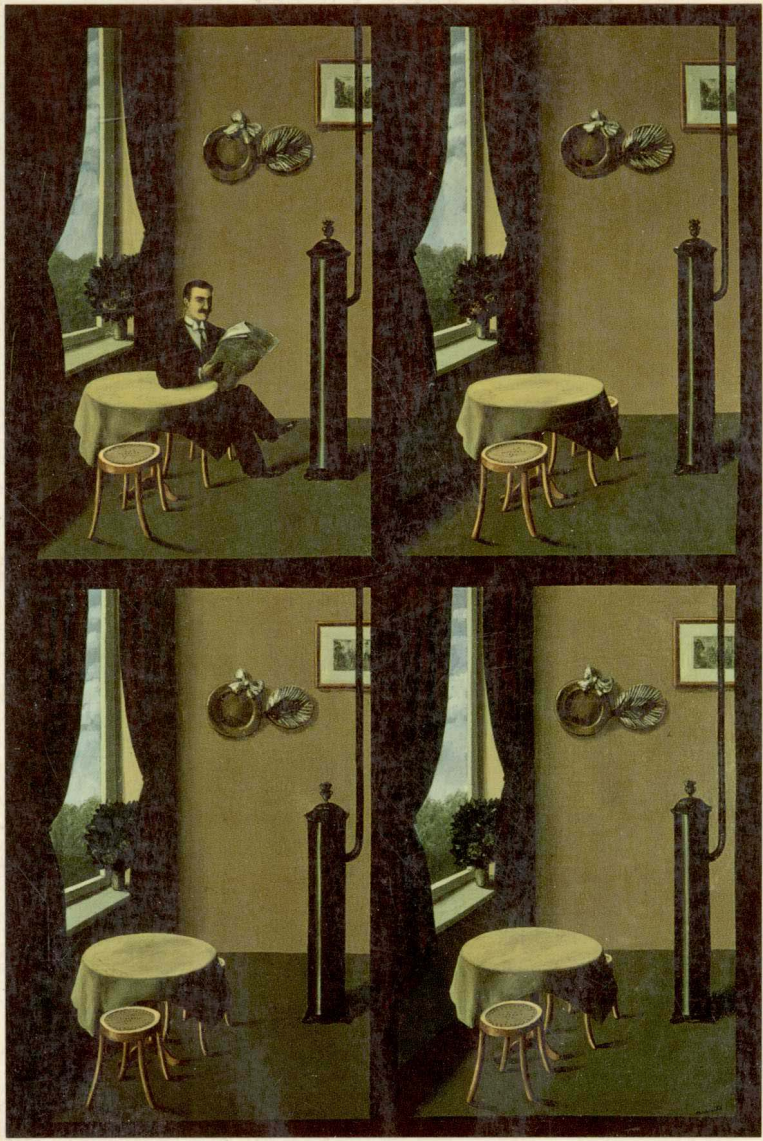


The Art of Reading

CONTEXTS FOR WRITING

S E C O N D E D I T I O N



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The Art of Reading

CONTEXTS FOR WRITING

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The Art of Reading

CONTEXTS FOR WRITING

To
Diane, Mary, Lynn, and
Don, David, and Aaron

The Art of Reading, like its companion text, *The Act of Writing*, aims to involve students directly and immediately in the process of intellectual inquiry. Both books grow out of two interrelated convictions: that active, engaged reading develops the writer's resources and resourcefulness; and that active, engaged writing stimulates and clarifies the reader's responses to texts. Underlying these convictions is our view that reading and writing are both personal and social acts—personal because we bring our individual perceptions and experiences to bear on texts when reading or writing; and social because the meanings we create depend on a shared understanding of language and culture that is shaped in discussion with others.

Part 1, "An Approach to Reading," introduces reading as a creative process of making potential meanings real. Exercises and explanations in this section are designed to prepare students to read and write in response to Part 2, "A Collection of Readings." Our goal in Part 1 is to teach students to think and write critically about a variety of texts. We attempt to show students how they can participate in the construction of a text's meaning by reading it thoughtfully and writing about it in relation to their lives and thought. As Robert Scholes suggests in his recent book, *Protocols of Reading*, we only really learn to read any text by writing ourselves into it. We begin truly to read a text when we do so as if our lives depend on it. And indeed they do, for as Scholes reminds us, "We live in the light of what we have read." To this we add: We read in the light of what we have lived.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of ways to respond to texts. Throughout its four major sections students are invited, as they read, to consider their subjective impressions as well as their personal experience. They are offered assisted invitations to write in response to their reading. And they are introduced to a method and a set of strategies for developing their responses in writing. Chapter 2 provides an approach to the interpretation and evaluation of texts. In this chapter, students are presented with a method of engaging texts analytically. They are provided with ample demonstrations of interpretation in process and are invited to participate in developing their own interpretations and evaluations of texts in connection with those written by the editors and by their students. Throughout both of these pedagogical chapters students are offered numerous opportunities to write.

Following the pedagogical chapters is Part 2, a rich and varied collection of readings. Included are poems, stories, and essays that span a wide range of disciplines. The thematically organized selections represent differing viewpoints and values on topics that include relationships, education, work, power, nature, religion, and science. Reading and writing about this broad range of topics, both individually and together, offers students ample opportunity to develop their powers of analysis and evaluation as well as to see connections among disciplines.

A word about the title, *The Art of Reading*. We believe that reading is more than a “skill” that can be factored into a set of subskills. Instead, we view reading as an important humanizing act that engages both mind and heart, an act that evokes feeling as well as thought, and one that invokes and creates personal and social values. Our vision of reading respects its richness and complexity. It acknowledges its creative dimension. And it recognizes that real reading is a matter crucial for living, for our lives and conceptions of identity are bound up with what we read and how we come to understand and value that reading. Reading well constitutes a form of living well. Reading well ultimately is a source of lifelong pleasure.

Changes in This Edition

Elements new to this second edition include the following:

- A streamlined organization of the two pedagogical chapters
- A greater emphasis on writing and its relation to reading
- Questions for each reading selection
- Exercises and suggestions for writing
- Introductory headnotes for each thematic unit of the anthology
- Author biographies preceding each writer’s work

Replacing the four chapters devoted to pedagogy in the first edition are two thorough pedagogical chapters, each with four sections, all of which conclude with a set of suggestions for writing. Both chapters include a thorough explanation of the act of reading and a practical demonstration of the act of writing. Both chapters begin with reading and end with writing; both repeatedly illustrate how to work from reading to writing—and back again.

The anthology, too, has been carefully revised. In addition to providing fresh selections, we have reorganized the eight sections. Each of these thematic sections is now prefaced by a general introductory headnote. Most sections include at least seven selections of nonfiction prose, one play or short story, and three poems. Every selection is introduced by the author’s biography, and it is concluded with a few questions for discussion and suggestions for writing. At the end of each section we have also provided additional topics for writing and discussion to encourage comparative analysis of selections. These added pedagogical aids, we believe, enhance the book’s value for teacher and student alike.

Acknowledgments

In working on *The Art of Reading* we received assistance from the following reviewers, whose sound advice helped us very much: Elouise M. Bell, Brigham Young University; Joseph Comprone, University of Louisville; Jan Cooper, Oberlin College; Joan Gilson, University of Missouri—Kansas City; Diana George, Michigan Technological University; Richard Harmston, University of Michigan; Richard Jenseth, Pacific Lutheran University; Dix McComas, University of Louisville; and William Pasch, Clayton State College.

The *Instructor's Manual* for the book, which contains many useful teaching suggestions, has been expertly prepared by Judith Stanford, who is now a contributing author to the text as well. You can obtain a copy of the manual by contacting your local McGraw-Hill representative or by writing to:

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For bringing us together to work on the book and for supporting our efforts generously and graciously, we thank Steve Pensinger, editor, publisher, and friend. Thanks also to his associate, David Morris. We would like to thank especially Mary Shuford who, as project editor, gracefully shepherded *The Art of Reading* through production; Carolyn Viola-John, who expertly copy edited our manuscript, making many excellent suggestions for improvement; Nancy Brooks, the indexer, and Karen Osborne, the proofreader, who both contributed to the accuracy of the text. And thanks finally to Reed Stock, Ken Brewer, and Aden Ross for their suggestions for the collection of readings; and to Anita Ciminna, Sylvia LoGiudice, Shelly Hall, and Ann Friedli for assisting with manuscript preparation.

Eric Gould
Robert DiYanni
William Smith
Judith Stanford

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An
Approach
to Reading

