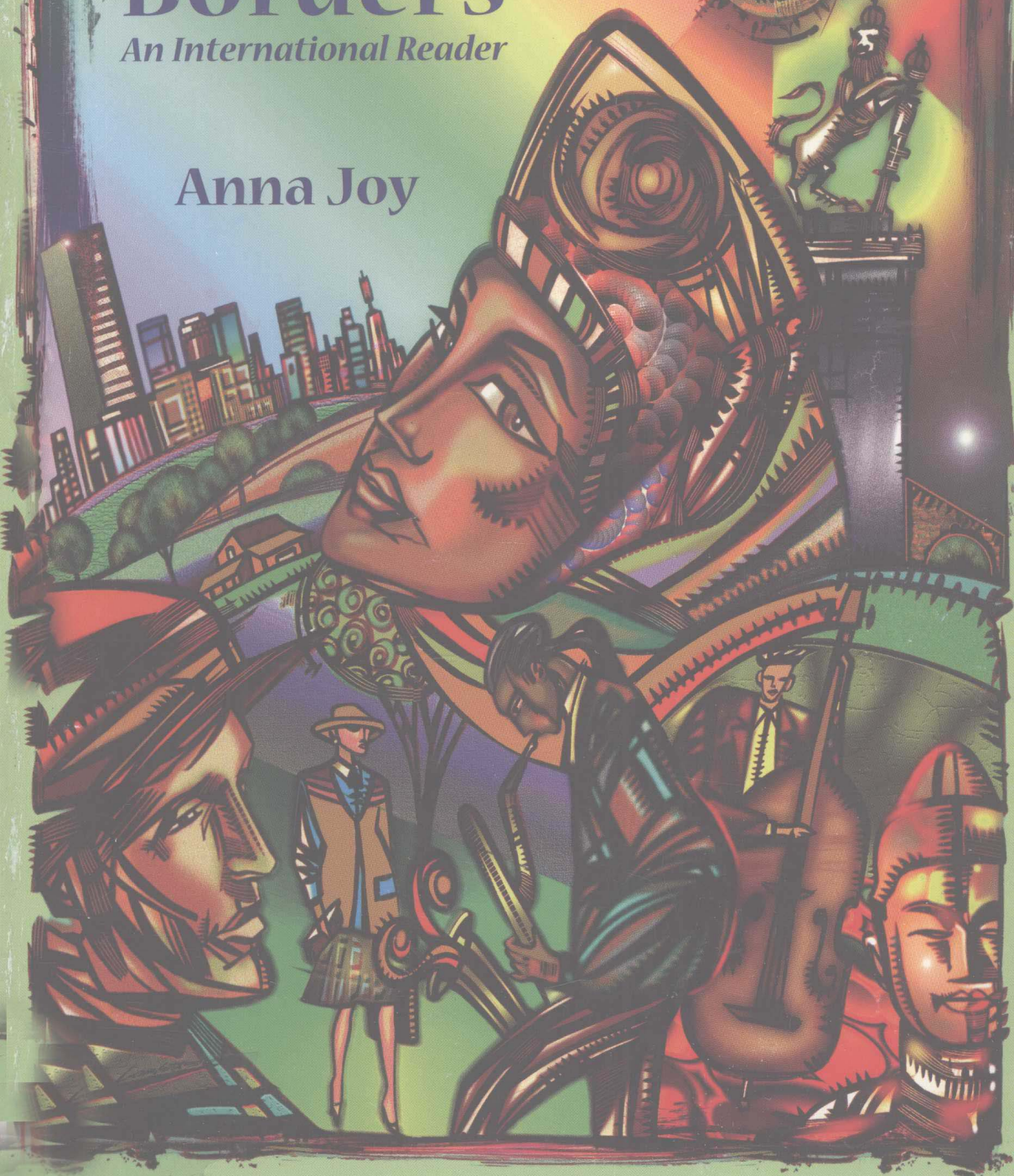


Crossing Borders

An International Reader

Anna Joy



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PREFACE

Undoubtedly philosophers are in the right when they tell us that
nothing is great or little otherwise than by comparison.

Jonathan Swift
Gulliver's Travels

Marshall McLuhan predicted in 1964 that everyone on the planet would soon be living in a “global village” created by mass media. The accuracy of his prediction is borne out by the presence of Western pop culture in all but the most inaccessible countries of the world. Pictures of even the remotest corners of the globe appear routinely on our television sets. Anyone with a radio or television set can learn about or view conflicts anywhere on earth. In the past decade, the United States has sent troops to Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East. Multinational corporations and economic alliances worldwide have internationalized trade. Our connection to the rest of the world is so immediate and inevitable that we need to acquire at least a minimal understanding of world geography, history, social and political systems, and general culture in order to join the world community.

Crossing Borders: An International Reader focuses on multicultural issues as examined in provocative international readings. An important goal of the book is to help students appreciate the complex, interconnected world in which we live. The book is also intended to introduce students to the richness and variety of human cultures and to the depth and quality of writing produced by authors outside of the United States.

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THIS BOOK

This book is characterized by several features that are unique and that differentiate it from other multicultural and international readers. Other readers often rely heavily on personal narratives, resulting in a shortage of rhetorical and analytical models. In this book, two out of three readings consist of objective analyses and can serve as examples of expository writing. Of those selections that use narrative, most are short fiction; other narrative pieces use detailed explanations to make a point.

Selections in this reader also give students practice reading across the disciplines. Authors' experiences and expertise in history, psychology, sociology, and anthropology shape their discussions. Chapter 4, for example, includes an analysis of children in

Balinese culture by Margaret Mead, one of the United States' most widely recognized anthropologists. Other writers, like novelist and essayist Barbara Kingsolver, are also well represented. The interdisciplinary aspect of the readings make it possible to combine college composition with courses across the disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, sociology, and history.

Finally, in addition to its emphasis on models other than narrative and its attention to interdisciplinary readings, this book offers writing instruction that sets it apart from other anthologies with an international focus. Chapter 1 offers guidelines for reading texts that may challenge the student's sense of cultural norms. Students are introduced to ideas about culture and ways to examine cultural attitudes and subjects that may seem foreign to them. Guidelines for careful reading help students evaluate a writer's assumptions about family, politics, social issues, and human behavior, assumptions that are often determined by the writer's culture. Students are also invited to examine their own biases about these subjects. Chapter 1 also includes instructions for writing a summary, a sample summary and summary abstract, and a practice exercise on summary writing. Chapter 2 discusses the reading journal and covers writing a response paper. In chapter 3 students are invited to write comparative essays. The chapter discusses readings that compare cultures, offers suggestions for writing a paper comparing two texts, and provides a sample comparative paper. Chapter 4 shows students how to write an investigative paper that draws on information from several texts. Exercises and topics in chapters 2 through 4 permit students to practice what they have learned about writing response papers, comparative essays, and information papers.

ORGANIZATION

Part 1, the book's first four chapters, guides students through the writing tasks entailed in composing summaries and various types of essays and papers. Part 2, a thematically organized anthology, is composed of approximately forty readings of varying length that have been arranged in chapters focusing on eight different themes. Each chapter begins with a "First Thoughts" section of epigraphs or longer quotations designed to help students start thinking about the chapter's theme or ideas raised within the chapter.

READING SELECTIONS

The readings in this book introduce students to a variety of styles, genres, and cultural contexts. Genres include essays, autobiographies, professional studies, informed analyses, and a sprinkling of poems and short stories. The authors and their subjects cover 27 countries and 22 distinct cultural or religious groups, 12 from the United States. Six selections focus on either global or regional concerns. In addition to its international readings, each chapter contains at least one selection about the United

States, and other readings offer comparisons between situations in the United States and those in other countries.

Many of the writers represented in this text are internationally known; several are Nobel laureates. Important contributors include Czeslaw Milosz, Aung San Suu Kyi, Pablo Neruda, Salman Rushdie, Naguib Mahfouz, Franz Kafka, Sembene Ousmane, and Federico Garcia Lorca. Writers from various academic disciplines and cultural groups in this country are represented by such well-known authors as Audre Lorde, Connie May Fowler, Gish Jen, Margaret Mead, Gloria Anzaldúa, Neil Postman, and Barbara Kingsolver.

Thematically arranged readings, which begin in chapter 5, focus on themes common to human experience: the family, rites of passage, working, custom and gender roles, the individual and the group, immigrants and exiles, the artist in society, and the spiritual life. Although many of the readings have not appeared in other anthologies, each has been tested in the classroom and proven to be engaging and challenging for students.

OTHER FEATURES OF THE TEXT

Each major reading selection in this volume is preceded by information about the author, and many readings are introduced with a section entitled “Facts about . . .,” which introduces the region or culture treated in the selection. This information gives students a context for interpreting points of view and themes. A map at the back of the book indicates the location of countries represented by readings in the book.

Each main reading selection is accompanied by four types of apparatus:

- “Writing before Reading” entries precede the readings and encourage students to write about issues related to the readings and to examine feelings they have about particular subjects.
- “Reading for Meaning” questions provide students with prompts to help them evaluate a text, to connect ideas in the text to their own experience, and to examine assumptions they might bring to the readings.
- “Comparing Texts” exercises encourage students to compare authors’ perspectives and approaches.
- Topics included in the “Ideas for Writing” sections give students the opportunity to write about their observations about cultures. Entries ask students to analyze ideas and styles of writing and to write reader-response papers and short research projects using resources in this textbook or outside sources.

All of these questions and topics for writing are useful for class discussion, for study groups, and as writing prompts. Additional readings sometimes appear in the “Comparing Texts” sections following the main reading selections (such readings, and others in the “Ideas for Writing” sections, are marked with an asterisk in the table of contents). These texts provide numerous possibilities for comparison. In the “Comparing Texts” section following Connie May Fowler’s “No Snapshots in the Attic: A

Granddaughter's Search for a Cherokee Past," for example, Fowler's essay is linked with several related texts. One comparative exercise contains excerpts from William Wood's *New England's Prospect* and Thomas Morton's *New England Canaan*, texts written in two of the early English settlements in North America. In this exercise, students are asked to analyze the assumptions the authors make about the native people they encountered in the "New World." The intent of such exercises is to offer additional perspectives on historical, social, political, or ethical issues discussed in the main readings.

One reading, the first chapter of Mary Wollstonecroft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* appears as an appendix at the back of this book. The second appendix offers suggestions for using the Internet to gather information and to communicate with people interested in cross-cultural issues, while the third appendix contains a useful bibliography arranged by chapter themes. Other helpful items at the back of the book include a geographical index, a rhetorical index, and a thematic index.

ANCILLARIES

An Instructor's Manual to accompany *Crossing Borders: An International Reader* includes an overview of the themes in each chapter, approaches to teaching the reading selections, a sample course outline, suggested answers to "Reading for Meaning" entries, and considerations for discussing exercises and topics in the sections "Comparing Texts" and "Ideas for Writing."

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My appreciation goes to my friend and editor, Helen Triller-Yambert, for her excellent sense of what this book is about and for her sound advice about how to improve it. I am also indebted to the editorial and production staff at Harcourt who have offered their expert guidance and generous support all along the way. Special thanks to Julie McBurney, Laurie Bondaz, Cindy Young, and April Eubanks.

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Most of all, I wish to thank the writers who have contributed to this book, many of whom write at great risk to themselves. The world is a richer place because of them.

Anna Joy

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