

S E C O N D

THE
HARPER & ROW
READER

Liberal Education Through
Reading and Writing

WAYNE C. BOOTH
MARSHALL W. GREGORY

E D I T I O N

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PROFESSIONAL COPY



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**The Harper & Row Reader: Liberal Education Through
Reading and Writing, Second Edition**

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Preface

The Harper & Row Reader has met with the kind of success that supports our belief that many writing teachers want a reader to offer students an education at the same time that it helps them improve their writing. It was our conviction when we prepared the first edition, and now, that the aims of both general education and writing are most successfully fulfilled when they are intertwined. That they can be intertwined is the foundation upon which the Reader stands.

What's New in the Second Edition

Under the rigors of four years of classroom use, and in light of many helpful suggestions from both teachers and students, we have come to see several ways of increasing the Reader's effectiveness and enriching the selections. (In all, twenty-six new pieces have been added to the second edition.) Users of the first edition will note that we have transposed the chapters on language and critical thinking so that critical thinking is now introduced earlier. The work now being done on the relationship between critical thinking and learning, especially critical thinking and writing, suggests that this will be useful.

One of the first edition's most successful features—the inclusion of a number of essays which “spoke” to each other from opposite sides of a topic—has now been extended systematically throughout the book. Each chapter now has at least one such pair of essays, sometimes two pairs, set apart under the heading “Ideas in Debate.” Paul Goodman and Karl Popper disagreeing about the value of utopian thinking, Thomas Love Peacock and E. M. Forster disagreeing about the value of art in a technological society, Stephen Toulmin and B. F. Skinner disagreeing about the role of ethics in science, and C. S. Lewis and Bertrand Russell disagreeing about the authority of Christianity—these are the voices of reasoned opinion and civilized controversy. Lively, opinionated, rich, searching, and inquisitive, these voices do not compel assent in every case, but they do command attention and respect.

In chorus they exemplify the educated mind at work, inquiring with energy and moral responsibility into a diverse range of important issues. We firmly believe that both teachers and students will enjoy the education that attends the study of these controversies.

A frequent request received from users of the first edition was to include more fiction and poetry in the second edition. This we have done, taking care to make these additions consistent with the character of the book as a whole. We have not turned *The Harper & Row Reader* into a literature text, nor will the teacher be required to change the focus of the course in order to use the literary pieces. Fiction and poetry are included here mainly as argument. (It should be clear, however, that teachers who prefer to use literature in the freshman class will find more to work with in the second edition than in the first.) We have chosen stories and poems that have a strong argumentative slant, such as Faulkner's "Delta Autumn" and Shirley Jackson's "Flower Garden." Such works allow students to see the rhetorical, argumentative, and polemical dimensions of such "literary" features as metaphor and narrative. This will not only enrich students' knowledge of how arguments actually get advanced in the world, but will also offer them and their teachers a welcome change of pace without throwing the course into confusion.

We have added a rhetorical index specifically designed for student use. We have not indexed all of the ideas, concepts, and themes in the essays, but we have indexed all of the references to, and most of the examples of, rhetorical devices and strategies. Thus if students are unclear, for example, about the meaning or use of analogy, a quick glance at the index will take them to a number of places where analogy is either discussed or exemplified. (As a further aid, a rhetorical table of contents is included in the instructor's manual.)

Finally, Chapter 3, on language, has been heavily revised and somewhat expanded in order to provide the student with better discussions of language as the fundamental milieu of human existence, and to present a sharper view of the political and educational controversies involved in language usage and study.

None of these changes affects our initial assumption that students using this book will also have access to a standard "rhetoric" and a handbook of English. In "Why Take This Course?" (pp. 3-5) and "Why Use a 'Reader' in a Writing Course?" (pp. 6-9), we try to explain the importance of a course like this for both students and teachers. Here we offer only a brief overview of our intentions. A fuller picture will emerge from reading our introductory essays in Part One and from sampling our introductions, questions for discussion, and suggested essay topics.

Purpose of the Course

We have assumed from the beginning that it is not only wasted effort in practice but indefensible in theory to attempt to train students to write without educating them. We assume, in other words, that writers must have something to say in order to have something to write, and that what they

have to say will depend mainly on what they know, how they think, and who they are, not just on their mastery of isolated skills. We assume, further, that we write not just as thinkers but as moral agents attempting to do something in or to the world. Any attempt to teach writing as if it were something separate from our character, or to reduce writing instruction to the status of a "service course," insults our students and shortchanges our culture.

Obviously, we cannot offer decisive proof for these assumptions—as opposed to views that we think are cynical, impoverished, or unjust—but we have not chosen them blindly. In what we know of empirical research and learning theory, we find no justification for believing that learning to write well can be divorced from the daily nourishment of trying to understand what other writers have said and then trying to respond with something worth saying.

None of this means that we should fail to teach what are sometimes called "skills." But whatever skills we teach should be taught because they are important to achieving larger goals. Education, after all, is not just for abstract performance but to obtain wisdom. That term may seem old-fashioned or pretentious to your ears, but surely it describes the ends of education better than many modern, "value-free" equivalents such as "maturity," "integrated selfhood," or "effective functioning as a critical and creative adult." But whatever your terms, we here invite you to join us in the unending quest for a liberal education. When courses in "composition" or "rhetoric" or "communication" are viewed in this light, they are for us without question the most important in any curriculum. If this claim seems extravagant to you (as it will almost certainly seem to your students), we hope that working through this book will justify it.

The notion of "working" cannot be dodged. We were convinced from the beginning that the job we wanted to do would require a reader with a fair number of pieces both longer and harder than those in most of the recent anthologies. Toughness for its own sake would no doubt be silly, but students cannot be stretched by what is already within easy reach. In each chapter we have thus included substantial essays, some of them once popular in readers but now abandoned, many of them never anthologized before.

Not all of our selections are hard, however; we have provided a range of both difficulty and styles. Nor have we made our selections with any sense that we are self-appointed guardians of an aristocratic tradition that the barbarian hordes have been neglecting. The distinction between aristocrats and barbarians seems to us absurd, especially when thinking about American education. The education we try to serve here is the kind that we think would be defensible for any group of young people in any historical period—a mixture of the best thinking that people are doing now with the best thinking from other periods.

The result, we believe, is a distinguished and engaging collection of essays. It is a controversial collection. In each chapter some essays confront others directly, while others address issues shared by other essays. Disagreement is found everywhere. The collection is also unusually wide-ranging.

Even so, we obviously do not offer a complete list of topics important to liberal education, or a survey of the entire range of possible views about any one topic. Any critical reader will find that entire disciplines are either ignored or underrepresented; among the liberal arts, for example, we talk little about logic or grammar, but much about rhetoric. More particularly, many political, religious, and philosophical views go unmentioned. But we hope that our recommended approach to the readings will itself provide a way to compensate for our omissions and biases. In our introductions and questions, we have tried hard to avoid the suggestion, found in too many anthologies these days, that the authors and their editors are somehow privy to the one right way of looking at the world. And we assume that the kind of critical thinking we encourage throughout this book will in itself compensate, in the long run, for the inevitable gaps and distortions in our choice of selections.

Methods

Thinking of the difficulties presented to beginners by many of our pieces, we have asked ourselves what kind of guidance we would have welcomed when we were beginning college students. The result is that we offer more extensive commentary than any other reader we have seen. Of course we have tried to modulate our editorial voice, according to the difficulty of the selections, by limiting our introductions to a paragraph for some simpler pieces, while demonstrating how to perform extensive analyses of some of the more difficult works. For those to whom our commentary seems excessive, the format makes it easy to skip our words and work exclusively on our selections.

The introductions to the readings provide only a minimum of biographical and bibliographical information; we concentrate instead on grappling with the issues. “Grappling” is the word, because we do not conceal our own inability to solve many of the issues raised. These works have stretched us as we have performed our editing, and they do so still. Too many anthologies have seemed to us to imply that their editors now have the whole of education taped, and that the students’ task is to discover what the editors claim to know already.

Similarly, we have not hesitated to raise questions for discussion that we ourselves cannot answer, though we hope to have raised none that would leave us tongue-tied. We have tried to strike a balance between relatively determinate questions about the authors’ procedures and open-ended questions about the issues.

In our suggested essay topics we have, in contrast, suggested no topics that we could not happily write on ourselves. This has meant avoiding assignments that seem canned, arbitrary, abstract, or impossibly ambitious. (No doubt we have not always succeeded, even after much probing and pruning, but most of our topics *have* been tried out in the only crucible that counts in such matters: the classroom itself.) Generally, our assignments place students in situations where they can aim for concrete objectives directed at specific audiences, choosing appropriate strategies and dealing with ideas raised or

suggested by the piece they have just read. If they take our suggestions seriously, they will discover that learning to write well has become their own goal, not just the instructor's or the editors'.

Organization

Our selections offer great flexibility to both students and teachers. Teachers and students can enter *The Harper & Row Reader* at any of several levels of reading difficulty. For example, a class might well move through the whole text using mainly the shorter and less ambitious pieces, or a term could be built mainly on the longer and harder essays. Or a class of "middling" preparation might well choose to read all or most of the readings in a few chapters, beginning with the epigraphs that introduce a chapter and working right through to the toughest arguments at the end. Some classes might want entirely to ignore the sequence of our chapters, and the order within them, though we hope—since our discussion material in general builds upon itself—that most classes will profit from following our organization.

We have, then, worked throughout in the conviction that reading, writing, and thinking are integrally related. No doubt every student will at some point need to pay special attention to isolated skills; some will profit from drill—in grammar, in reading techniques, in sentence combining. They will profit, that is, provided they have learned why the drill is important, and why learning to write well is something they should want for themselves, not something they do just for their teachers, their grades, or their parents.

To educate is always harder than to train, and the world will no doubt always find demonstrable uses for those who are trained without knowing what they have been trained *for*. But neither students nor their teachers should have to choose between a "useful" practical training and a "useless" liberal education. Anything truly liberating is also useful, and anything truly useful, when done well and with joy, is also liberating. The best versions of liberal and practical education are ultimately inseparable.


Regardless of any mistakes we have made in our own theory and practice, we feel quite sure about one thing: the required freshman composition course (whatever it is called and however it is staffed) can provide the most important experience of any student's college years and a continuing experience of self-education for the teacher. It can do so, that is, when it enables students and teachers together to repossess for themselves what others have learned in the past and then to engage each other pointedly and eagerly, sharing their thoughts about who they are and how they should try to live, here and now.

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Wayne C. Booth
Marshall W. Gregory



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P A R T

THE COURSE,
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O N E

