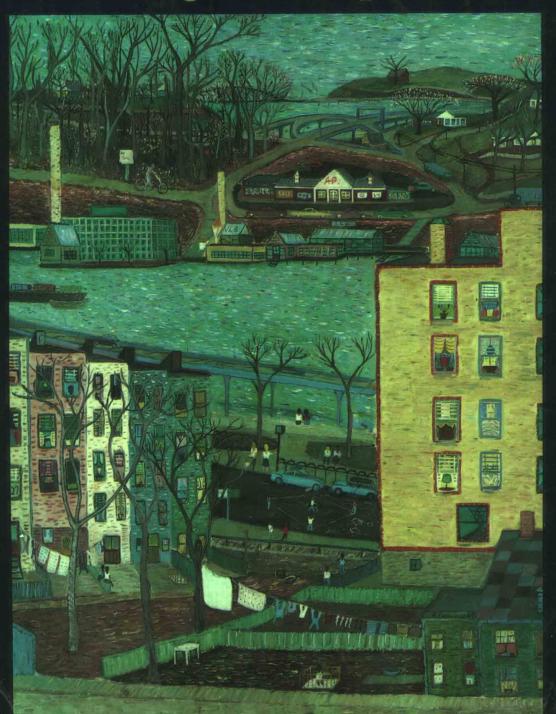
# Crossing Cultures

Readings for Composition



# **Crossing Cultures**

## Readings for Composition

#### THIRD EDITION

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### **PREFACE**

The preparation of the third edition of our reader Crossing Cultures has made us, its editors, realize how far, and how fast, the world has advanced in its need for cross-cultural understanding. In the early 1980s, when we prepared the first edition, it still seemed necessary to justify the development of an anthology on such a theme. In the 1990s, entering freshmen can reasonably be expected to be aware of the significance to themselves of foreign places a student in the 1980s was unlikely to have heard of. They know that Peruvian farmers support "the habit" of Americans, that sweatshops in Singapore imply a loss of jobs in the United States, and that a "peace dividend" in the American budget may depend on what happens in places like Lithuania. Above all, the threat to the environment makes us conscious, more than the threat of war ever did, of the need to interact on a world scale—in fact, of the virtual impossibility not to interact.

#### Using Cross-Cultural Themes

The success of this book has established the fact that cross-cultural subjects, broadly construed, work well in a composition course. They have a strong impact on students: They challenge accepted beliefs by asking students to consider the lives, ideas, aspirations—and prejudices — of people who are very different from them. At the same time, reading, and having one's classmates read, selections related to one's own culture are likely to heighten self-assurance and stimulate ethnic or racial pride. Of course, Crossing Cultures addresses itself to a wider audience than that. It is safe to say that virtually all students will, in their lives and careers, encounter ethnic diversity. In a multiethnic society like that of the United States, they can expect to work with people of diverse backgrounds. Increasingly they are also likely to come in contact with other cultures by working abroad for a time, or with people who come from other parts of the world. For that reason, Crossing Cultures includes selections that address themselves to American issues as well as global ones.

#### Moving to a Global Perspective

The nine parts into which the selections have been organized represent topics that seem to us important to cross-cultural understanding. At the same time we wanted to provide a systematic progression from the more familiar to the more distant. In the earlier parts, therefore, the concentration is on intra-American issues. From these the selections gradually move to global subjects.

#### Crossing Cultures as a Composition Text

Content that is thematically interesting and challenging is not enough, however, for a reader in composition. To be useful in the fullest sense, such a text has to go beyond ideas to meet the rhetorical requirements. Crossing Cultures is designed to meet these requirements. The selections represent the major patterns of organization; they vary widely in length and difficulty; some may be useful as models, others as challenges for argumentation.

It is in this last respect that the third edition has been strengthened in particular. More than before, selections can be used in conjunction for the development of argument. To give one example: We have retained, from the second edition, the essays by Richard Rodriguez and James Fallows that argue their differing views of bilingual education. To these we have added an essay by a major African writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, that brings yet another point of view to bear on that subject and at the same time raises an issue that may put yet another piece, "World Language: English," in a new and different light.

As noted previously, the nine parts of the book move thematically from the more to the less familiar, the simpler to the more complex. The same holds for the rhetorical aspect: Each of the earlier parts moves from narration to exposition; in the later parts the personal narratives diminish, and expository and argumentative selections increase both in number and intricacy.

Each selection, except for the poems, is followed by a set of exercises. "Words to Know" singles out words and terms with which students may not be familiar. "Some of the Issues" aids students in a careful reading of the selection. "The Way We Are Told" leads them to an examination of the author's strategies. Each exercise section concludes with "Some Subjects for Essays." Asterisks indicate questions or topics that combine more than one selection or relate to the partopening photograph.

#### New in the Third Edition

Thirty percent of the selections are new to this edition. Among the writers included are Toni Morrison and Margaret Atwood, the latter also adding a country (Canada) not previously represented. More selections than previously cross the Pacific Ocean rather than the Atlantic. The increased interest in the "Pacific Rim," particularly China and Japan, led to the inclusion of several new selections. Three new pieces are by very young writers still in college or recently out of it. Two poems and one piece of fiction have been added. A wide range of personal narratives remains one of the strengths of the book.

Headnotes have been expanded, when it seemed appropriate, to include information on the country, the culture, or the history that forms the background of the selection. For the first time, photographs precede each of the nine parts and are tied into one or more selections through the exercises.

#### Acknowledgments

As was the case with the second edition, reviewers of the book have given much helpful advice on the choice of selections as well as other features. In particular we thank: Steve Adams, University of Minnesota — Duluth; Nancy K. Barry, University of Iowa; Vilma Chemers, California State University — Long Beach; T. Obinkaram Echewa, West Chester University; Susan Feinberg, Illinois Institute of Technology; R. Janie Isackson, DePaul University; Susan Dean Jacobs, DePaul University; Michelle M. Tokarczyk, Goucher College; Joan R. Vandergriff, University of Missouri — Kansas City; Victor Villanueva, Northern Arizona University; Winifred J. Wood, Wellesley College; and Mitsuye Yamada, Cypress College.

We give particular thanks to our editor at Macmillan, Barbara Heinssen. Her constant willingness to give time and thought to this edition has led to several changes that we believe improve the book. Peter A. Knapp, the assistant editor, has been very resourceful in helping us to solve a number of problems. Eric Newman has been an exemplary production supervisor, and Chris Migdol found us a group of remarkable photographs.

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