

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE: V. 2 Read Free



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- 3184 pages
- 02 Jun 2012
- WW Norton & Co
- 9780393912487
- English
- New York, United States

Want to Read. Download for print-disabled. Buy this book Better World Books. Share this book Facebook. Last edited by Clean Up Bot. October 5, History. An edition of The Norton anthology of English literature This edition published in by W. Norton in New York. Written in English. Not in Library. Paperback in English - 7th Pkg edition. Yet I wish this book would replace Romeo and Juliet as part of every high school English class in modern day. What early writer had to go through on their way to modern day enlightenment should not be hidden away in high level elective classrooms of higher education. Readers of all backgrounds should check it out. I give it five stars out of five stars. More at FH7publishing. Sep 10, Sammy rated it it was amazing Shelves: favourites. Why Norton? I'm glad you asked, friend! There are many schools of thought on anthologies, some negative, some positive, all fascinating.

Of course, if you're buying this because it's a university textbook then really you have no choice; for the rest of us, there's more than meets the eye. The negative responses tend to come in a few forms: 1: Anthologies reward superficiality. Much like surtitles at the opera, which help convey the surface meaning but encourage people not to "read" the music and t Why Norton?

Much like surtitles at the opera, which help convey the surface meaning but encourage people not to "read" the music and the action leading to sitcom jokes about opera characters saying "I love you" for ten minutes instead of being intrigued by the nuanced variety of that love , anthologies can only present certain works, or excerpts of such, from any individual's author's oeuvre. And these tend to be the works easier to grasp by the university student than more complex, often later, ones.

And while there's some merit to this argument, I think we ultimately must allow readers an entry point into authors. Children growing up in a world where only men are superheroes in the world of fiction can be subtly configured over time to believe this is true of men in the real world. The same can apply to the student - or armchair reader - exposed to the established writers, the majority of whom pre-WWII happen to be white, Christian men. This further marginalises already marginal authors, if they can't make it into the anthology. After all, for many interested readers, anthologies are like "Classical highlights" CDs: as far as people are going to wander in the direction of these genres. The Norton fights this bias, as much as one can, by regularly updating to new editions and basing their material on what actual university professors are teaching. There are always going to be canons created, no doubt about it, but - again - by providing as relevant a range of texts as possible, and reinforced by talented teachers, anthologies can encourage readers to dive further into the pool rather than luring them to the shallow parts with treats.

It won't be long before you find the websites of those creatures whose motivation cannot be hidden for long, and whose concerns about "the correct use of language" soon reveal their true feelings, which tend to be about how non-white people or women don't have the skills and understanding required Well, okay, now you're just being argumentative. Sure, literature isn't medicine; you don't need a degree to be knowledgeable. At the same time, it's hard to argue with the credentials of the editors of this volume. In short, no work is perfect, but we must have darlings before we can kill them, mustn't we? The exact opposite of complaint 2, this is the argument passed down to us from a certain section of the pantheon, such as Harold Bloom and A.

The battle rages - although it has subsided somewhat - on the line between "literary studies" and "cultural studies". Bloom's argument, simplified muchly, is that the study of literature - at a highschool or university level - has very certain purposes: the expansion of the mind, the intricate understanding of how works are constructed, and the necessary context to combine the author's philosophical and literary underpinnings with that of their ancestors and influences. All of this is working towards an ability to accurately analyse a text, and so it makes sense to use the best of the best. What merit sub-par examples? A master teacher must use masterful materials. For Bloom and I often agree with him, compiling, say, a textbook of poems from the s and incorporating a substantial female quota, or immigrant quota, at the expense of existing, frequently studied and highly renowned writers primarily because of their minority status does not serve this purpose.

This is not to say that Bloom has any chauvinistic tendencies - indeed, I would argue his passion for "good poetry" triumphs over all - but, to the proponents of this argument, studying a text primarily because the author was either little-known or has an historical relevance rather than a literary one is a task that should be left to history and sociology classes. The opposing argument sees the study of literature as serving different purposes as we stride through the 21st century. The skill to underline a Shelley poem until every rhetorical flourish has been catalogued is no longer the sole motivation for studying such a subject at university, and is now becoming a more niche habit, or at least is only one of the many colours now expected on an arts graduate's palette.

Besides which, after centuries in which straight white people have dominated Western discourse, and millennia in which men have done so, perhaps universities and culture must play a more emphatic role in reducing these inequalities that underpin our very institutions and ways of thinking? Whether this is the result of opening university studies up to too many people in a post-war class-conscious society, or whether it's just the natural evolution of a cultural mindset Either way, this argument would state that studying 10 of the great white male Elizabethans is redundant when two would serve. That even if a writer's work is of minor literary status, or even if the text being studied is, say, an abolitionist pamphlet from the midth century, it has other equally important merits.

That the study of how words are used throughout history, of the people and their eras, of popular literature as much as philosophical, is of note to the minds of today. For me, the answer to that lies somewhere in between. I have no doubt that we live in a world where, in great contrast to yesterday, the desires of the student often take precedence over the desires of the teacher. Bloom laments that the verse-novel is out of fashion because young people don't have the patience or the interest. It's no longer seen as relevant, and thus fades. Of course, this is true of any era, but I do feel that the need to attract students, and the "need" to "engage" is rapidly replacing an idea that students of a subject need to be receptive.

However, I'm also one of those so-called young people, and I can't deny that the middle volumes of the five-volume Norton Anthology of American Literature are fascinating, eye-opening, and truly educational reading particularly when they focus on the experiences of the non-straight-white-male, on the popular works of the time, and on works that reveal culture and humanity through reality and not just the structural experiments of a man sitting in a room with a Bible in one hand and Rousseau in the other.

And what of the positive aspects? Again, why Norton? It's - in the context of the above arguments - the best of the best. By routinely updating

their editorial policies, and by engaging with over a hundred university professors, Norton's selection comprises most any major author. I heartily recommend the "full" literary collection: English Literature 2 big or 6 small volumes, American Literature 5 small volumes, World Literature 6 small volumes, Poetry 3 volumes: "Poetry", "Modern Poetry", "Contemporary Poetry", and Short Fiction 1 volume.

The add-on Drama and Philosophy Anthologies are also delightful, but the former contains a certain selection of works people may already have on their shelves, and the latter is of course more involved reading. These are the works that drive writers and that have influenced them for centuries, and specifically the works that professors are currently teaching.

It's "self-sufficient". One of the Norton's aims is to be "self-sufficient", not in a hubristic way, but by providing enough of all the authors, as well as increasing numbers of long works with each edition, that a student or armchair traveller can confidently say they have experienced the author. No anthology can be everything or include everything, but having read these, one can say they have interacted with all the major eras and movements. It's a perfect place to take a dip. There are sections - the American Puritan narratives, for me - which will drive you bonkers with boredom. But there will be others that inspire you to seek out that author's other works or to pursue more work from the same school. The first joy of an anthology is in hearing an author's name mentioned, and dashing to the shelf to provide context or a quotation.

The second joy is even greater: the spontaneous flipping to a page and discovering someone or something new. Particularly with poetry and short stories, it can be hard for works to be republished. Something that premiered in an obscure periodical in , and was included in a "Collected Poems" of , can remain a blip on the cultural radar.

These anthologies don't necessarily suppress canon, they can also breathe life back into works. Well-prepared anthologies can be the perfect antidote to today's niche culture, and they can broaden your mind. It's a great relief that minorities - whether by number or by power - can now create work that appeals to them, and that our culture is no longer so dwarfed by the behemoths of three television networks or two movie studios.

It's astonishing to me that I can speak to four different people raised in the same culture as me at the same time, and have almost nothing in common with them in my taste or knowledge. Yet, this has also created a society of subcultures, a world in which Netflix's constant recommendations allow us to stay within our self-satisfied generic preferences. At best, it allows scattered individuals to find each other, and thus solidarity, in a global world.

At worst, it creates a situation wherein culture is stratified, mindsets drift further apart, and preferences in taste become more and more inherently political. The anthology reminds me of my childhood spent in libraries and video stores, selecting items almost arbitrarily to satisfy my greedy mind as it gulped down stories and ideas. Can it ever be a bad thing to be forced into expanding our mind to an era, a mindset, or a culture far from our own? Perhaps a little knowledge goes a long way. I promise I have university degrees, so please don't disparage me for saying this, but the truth is: you don't need to read everything.

If you find Proust too verbose, don't throw him away in disgust, just skim some boring parts. If you don't think the entirety of Moby-Dick is for you, read the Cliffs Notes and then read the handful of most consequential chapters to discover Melville's style and technique for yourself. We're so much luckier than Shakespeare or Dryden because we have years of additional culture to wade through. At the same time, this makes us so much unluckier! Not that I'm advocating skipping intricate works just because they require close reading, mind you, but I'm of the revolutionary? And, finally, they're just so darn fun. No, really. I marvel at the s, when a British family could sit down to a night that included a sitcom, a science program or Attenborough documentary, an episode of "Doctor Who", a police drama, and a cultural lecture. Maybe it worked best when there were only 2 television networks, and I'm generalising as I'm sure some dads wanted cop shows all night, but this structure reinforced the idea of a full meal.

You ate your Attenborough vegetables, digested your cultural carbs, downed your police protein, and were soothed by the sugar of sci-fi. Now, we've lost that manner of thinking. It's all sugar, all that time, and even if we do watch a documentary, it's not 13 episodes on the lengthy development of art, it's 50 minutes of the same shark attack repeated over and over: carbs! That's not to say that the Nortons are necessarily evenly distributed between the food groups, but they're a reminder that our predecessors in the Western world have had a lot to say: perhaps we should listen.

There are some side pros and cons, naturally. The newer additions wisely provide more info on styles and schools, for instance essays on poetry syntax and versification or introductions on the principal philosophies of the mid-century. As self-teaching increases, and as overworked lecturers are driven to assign additional non-classroom work that may involve students reading texts without any pedagogical support, the need for clear and concise contexts grows. My old Latin lecturer used to lament how my generation weren't even taught the principles of English grammar, thus considerably delaying his progress in teaching us the grammar of a different language entirely! The same holds true for introducing university students to the subcutaneous layers of literature when their schooling hasn't even prepared them for the epidermis.

There are quibbles, too. Of course everyone will find at least one author whom they feel is over- or under-represented. The footnotes system can be an intriguing one depending on taste. The decision to let individual works speak for themselves rather than help to decode them is perhaps the wisest one, but from time to time - especially in the realm of modernist poetry - I often wonder whether some stylistic elucidation would be a help.

It's the finest of lines between assistance and didacticism, one must admit. The choice not to modernise the spelling of texts from Middle English Chaucer being the principal example is en vogue at present, so who am I to kvetch about it, but nevertheless it sits uncomfortably with me. I concede that the student studying Chaucer at a graduate level will gain much from the original text, but I'm not sure that most students spending two weeks with him early in an Intro to Lit class will have as much luck. More to the point, the annotations for Chaucer seem sometimes niggardly. Or maybe I'm being a whiner, and should just be sure to have my dictionary and encyclopedias by my side. Faring better is the recent decision to include "context clusters" throughout all of the anthologies. These sub-sections focus on a specific topic - be it reactions to the French Revolution or the slavery debate in the USA - thus allowing students to easily contrast texts, and providing an additional justification for pamphlets or popular works not typically seen as "literary".

Let it also be said, in case you don't know, these babies are massive. Doorstop size and weight. If you're taking this with you on the bus, leave your child at home. And it's worth investigating which edition you're buying, particularly if purchasing online. Of course a difference of one or two editions won't be that much of a challenge - tastes evolve, but the literary tastes of can still be relied upon in However, an earlier edition from the '70s might be too far removed it might not seem like Romantic literature can change two hundred years after the fact, but you'd be surprised! In the game of literary canons, there are no definite answers. I doubt A. Byatt will ever be convinced that Bob Dylan or perhaps the popular ballads of the Medieval era merits a place in a poetic anthology any more than I suspect she's ever had pineapple on a pizza.

And some young iconoclasts will staunchly refuse to read Milton on the grounds that it "normalises pentameter" or some such guff. There will never be the ideal anthology, at least not for a topic as wide as "literature", so let's stop asking for it. But the anthology's job is not to be everything for all people, it is only to be as much as possible for as many as possible. Overview Exceptional selections. Abundant teaching resources. Unparalleled value.

The most-trusted and best-selling anthology continues to set the bar with a vibrant revision of the Major Authors Edition. Christ v. Introduction ; Timeline ; John Skelton ca. Hulme, F. Ramanujan ; Thom Gunn ; Derek Walcott b. Naipaul b. Coetzee b. There are no reviews yet.

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