

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE 6TH EDITION Read Free



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Author: Judith Tanka
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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 much, 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 mid 19th 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. It does have a lot of very good writings by many great authors. I bought this book for an American Literature class. Great book, with a lot of excellent stories, poems, and pros. I recommend this to anyone interested in American Lit. Skip to main content. About this product. Make an offer. Stock photo. Pre-owned: Lowest price The lowest-priced item that has been used or worn previously. Paperback in Good condition They are not actual photos of the physical item for sale and should not be relied upon as a basis for edition or condition. See all 8 pre-owned listings. Buy It Now. Synopsis About this title Now available in a portable multi-volume format, The Norton Anthology of American Literature is the classic survey of American literature from its sixteenth-century origins to its flourishing present.

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