



The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces

Part One

FIFTH CONTINENTAL EDITION



The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces

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FIFTH CONTINENTAL EDITION

Maynard Mack, *General Editor*

Bernard M. W. Knox

John C. McGalliard

P. M. Pasinetti

Howard E. Hugo

Patricia Meyer Spacks

René Wellek

Kenneth Douglas

Sarah Lawall



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Preface

To The Fifth Edition

The Continental Edition of *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces* is a selection of Western literature containing (with one exception) only works written originally in the ancient and modern foreign languages. The literatures represented include Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Icelandic, Irish, Norse, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Russian, Norwegian, and Nigerian. And the selections stretch in time from Homer and the Old Testament writers to such contemporaries of our own as Marguerite Duras and Gabriel García Márquez.

Like the current Fifth Edition of the larger version of *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, this Fifth Continental Edition is a new book throughout. Each selection has been carefully reconsidered for its contribution to an understanding of the author and period from which it comes, and for its representativeness of the ever-broadening cultural tradition which in these latter years of the twentieth century we all share.

Introductions and notes have been extensively revised—in many cases entirely rewritten—to take advantage of the best critical scholarship of the 1980s and to guarantee their clarity and usefulness for student readers. To the same end, introductions to individual selections now appear as headnotes, placed immediately before the work to which they refer, and all suggested lists of supplementary reading have been annotated to help students find their way about. The anthology as a whole has been redesigned and reset to produce a single volume rich in content but easy for student and teacher to handle and read.

In shaping that content, we have been generously assisted by the recommendations of a very large number of our users. On their advice some selections have been dropped, others changed, many added. To our Greek section, for instance, we have added by popular request those few poems of Sappho which are genuine—translated, that is to say, from Greek texts that have come down to us complete or all but complete, rather than, as is often the case with Sappho in English, fabricated by the translator from a few surviving words. On similar grounds, we have replaced our brief selections from Ovid's *Amores* in the Roman section with larger selections from his *Metamorphoses*, focusing especially on his accounts of the creation of the world and of the resistless principle of change that pervades all things terrestrial, including the human body, mind, and soul. "What we have been, / What we now are, we shall not be tomorrow." No Roman work has had a larger

influence on later European literatures than these portions of Ovid's greatest poem.

Our section on the Middle Ages we have quite transformed. *The Story of Deirdre* from early Irish literature, *The Song of the Seeress* from the Elder Edda of the Norsemen, and *Thorstein the Staff-Struck* from the Icelandic sagas, taken together with the Frankish *Song of Roland*, make possible a variety of excursions into the heroic-age literature of several great peoples (as well as backward looks toward Homer) which remind us poignantly how little the experiences that move us most have changed. We are further happy to have been able to add to this section the fascinating narrative poem *Eliduc* by Marie de France, so far as is known the earliest of French women poets. Any reader who wishes to explore the range of attitudes taken by men and women toward love will find in *Eliduc*, *The Story of Deirdre*, the "Testament" of Francois Villon, and the three stories we have chosen from Boccaccio's *Decameron* (not forgetting the three we have added to our Renaissance offerings from the *Heptameron* of Marguerite de Navarre) a rich supply of instructive contrasts and comparisons.

Additions of similar importance appear throughout the book. One of which we are pardonably proud is *The Reply (La Respuesta)* of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a Mexican nun who in 1691, in response to a covert put-down by her bishop, hammered out with delicious irony the most compelling defense of the rights of women to learn, teach, write, and publish to be found in any language prior to a manifesto by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792. Though a document—and a powerful document—Sister Juana's *Reply* earns its place in this anthology as a work of forensic art.

Other additions deserving special note are Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, rarely permitted to appear in an anthology; Marguerite Duras' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, one of the most haunting film scripts ever written; and Wole Soyinka's wonderfully funny yet touching comedy, *The Lion and the Jewel*. Collectively and singly these works open on a troubled landscape that we recognize as distinctively our own. *Endgame*, as has been suggested in our introduction, describes among other things what it is like to live in a universe emptied of meaning—save for whatever meanings, trifling, murderous, or grand, we human beings impose on it. *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, with or without the splendid motion picture produced from it, makes a superb text for close classroom examination, appealing as powerfully to our visual imaginations as to our moral sense. *The Lion and the Jewel*, by one of the most gifted of today's African writers, is the exception mentioned in our opening paragraph above: Soyinka, who is bilingual, wrote his play in English. Yet it is so rooted in the instincts and permeated by the ritualistic character of his native Nigerian culture, and at the same time so unforgettable a rendering of the forces tugging almost unbearably in our time at the hearts and minds of the Third World's peoples, that we have ventured to include it. Though written in English, it is far from being a British or American work.

Teachers or students who turn to the table of contents in this Fifth Continental Edition will find further improvements that we believe will please them. Improvements in the quality of the translations as new translations have appeared or become available to us from such eminences as W. H. Auden, John Ciardi, Robert Fagles, Robert Fitzgerald, John Fowles, and

many more. Improvements also in the representation of European romanticism, with poems by Heine, Hugo, and Leopardi now included along with prose by Rousseau, Chateaubriand, and Pushkin, in addition of course to Goethe's *Faust*. Improvements likewise in the representation of later figures and our contemporaries. Rilke, Lorca, Akhmatova, and Solzhenitsyn have been restored to these pages, and Borges ("The Garden of Forking Paths"), Robbe-Grillet ("The Secret Room"), and García Márquez ("Death Constant beyond Love") have been added. Needless to say, in making these additions and improvements, we have not scanted the earlier great modern innovators like Proust, Kafka, and Mann, in fiction, without whom the course of the later twentieth-century novel is unintelligible, and Büchner, Ibsen, Chekhov, Pirandello, Brecht, and now Soyinka in the drama. As Dryden once said of Chaucer, here is "God's plenty."

It becomes a particular pleasure to welcome to our group with this edition Patricia Meyer Spacks, professor of English at Yale University and currently chairman of its department, and to re-welcome Sarah Lawall, professor of comparative literature at the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts. Users of this volume whose special interests draw them to works of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, or to those of our own century, will readily understand our pride in their company.

THE EDITORS

The Norton Anthology
of World Masterpieces

FIFTH CONTINENTAL EDITION



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