

THE
Norton
Anthology
OF
American
Literature

RONALD GOTTESMAN
LAURENCE E. HOLLAND
DAVID KALSTONE
FRANCIS MURPHY
NORMAN PARKER
WILLIAM H. FRITCHARD

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Preface

THIS ENTIRELY NEW anthology of American literature has been devised to close the ever-widening gap between the current conception and appraisal of the American literary heritage and the way in which American literature is represented in existing anthologies. To this end, the editors and their editorial advisers polled a large number of teachers and used the resulting consensus to supplement their own judgments. The present anthology, as a consequence, not only reprints traditional masterpieces of American literature, but includes a number of innovations both in organization and content, which bring the volume into accord with contemporary evaluations and points of view.

The most prominent change is that the break between the two volumes occurs not before (or in the middle of) Whitman, but after Emily Dickinson (Samuel Clemens beginning our Volume 2). When the first recognizable American anthologies were published sixty years or more ago, it made sense to start the second half of the course with Whitman. After all, at the end of World War I, the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* was a more recent publication than *The Waste Land* is today. Even Whitman's "deathbed edition" was more recent than such a "contemporary" book as *The Naked and the Dead* is now. But despite the immense proliferation of important American writing in those same sixty years, anthologists have continued to divide the volumes in the same old way, with the result of increasingly compressing and underrepresenting the American literature of recent years. More than 75 percent of the 1,700 teachers we polled agreed with our decision to include both Whitman and Dickinson in their appropriate period in the first volume.

This reorganization enables us to represent twentieth-century literature adequately for the first time in an anthology of American literature. The many new authors and selections are there not because of the glamor of contemporaneity, but because they are of high literary merit and because their presence is needed in order to make sense of the literary history of our age.

To help make such sense, the editors have subdivided the standard but amorphous category, twentieth-century literature. The section "American Literature between the Wars 1914-1945" recognizes

that these three decades are a definable literary span with its own literary history. The body of literature after World War II has, in its turn, been divided into separate sections of prose and poetry. This division has enabled the editors to write introductions and other editorial aids, as well as to make their selections, in such a way as to assist students in understanding the movements, trends, and careers in contemporary prose and contemporary poetry and to stimulate them to carry on their reading after they have finished the course.

The other sections of the anthology are also freshly conceived. In all of them, we have dropped the traditional period names and have discontinued the practice of organizing writers according to "influences" and "schools." In our simplified arrangement, we merely assign time-span titles to the six sections into which the volumes are divided (e.g., "Early American Literature 1620-1820"), and, with very few exceptions, we arrange all the authors chronologically by date of birth. This change eliminates period labels, group labels, and topic labels that encourage students to prejudge the literature, while permitting teachers the utmost flexibility in organizing their own courses.

In all periods, teachers are offered more authors and (by at least major authors) more selections than, in all probability, they will have time to assign or teach. This principle of copiousness in selection is designed to allow teachers to set up their own reading lists, without the need to ask students to buy extra books. Out of the materials provided, instructors can teach, for example, their own selections of Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, Dickinson, Pound, Frost, or Williams; they can also vary the assignments from year to year as their interests or their students' interests change. Whenever possible, we have made selections that would show a writer's development; for example, instead of representing Adrienne Rich with a random handful of poems, we have chosen thirteen poems that demonstrate the arc of this notable poet's career, from her first to her most recent book.

On the principle of making the anthology self-sufficient—thereby eliminating heavy extra costs to the student and ensuring that the wrong book won't be brought to class—we print in their entirety a great many long works, all notable achievements in American literature: Franklin's *Autobiography* (newly edited from manuscript); Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (with the "Custom-House" preface); Thoreau's *Walden*; Melville's *Benito Cereno* and *Billy Budd, Sailor*; Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; James's *Daisy Miller*; Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage. An Episode of the American Civil War* (again, newly edited from manuscript); and Bellow's *Seize the Day*. In addition we also offer Rowlandson's complete *Captivity and Restoration*; Fuller's *The Great Lawsuit* (the first major document of American feminism); Chopin's novel *The Awakening*; Wharton's novella *Burner Sisters*; and Faulkner's

Old Man. Longer poems printed in their entirety range from Cooke's *The Sot-Weed Factor* and Barlow's *The Hasty Pudding* through Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (complete with the 1920 "post-script"), Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Hart Crane's *Voyages* and *The Bridge*, and Ginsberg's elegy *Kaddish*.

A major responsibility of any new anthology is to redress the long neglect of woman writers in America. To this end, we profited from the advice of a large number of teachers who are women. In these two volumes, about 700 pages represent the work of some twenty-nine women. Some of these, of course, are familiar, but we also include the feminist Margaret Fuller; all three of the major woman local-colorists; the feminist-anarchist Emma Goldman; the influential innovator Gertrude Stein; and many other poets and writers of the twentieth century. Another responsibility of a new anthology is to do justice to the contributions of black writers to American literature and culture. We represent fourteen black authors.

This latest of "the Norton anthologies" incorporates the features that have established a new standard in literary texts for the classroom. The format is not that of the traditional anthology, but of a book to be read for pleasure. There are no forbidding double columns of prose and verse; the text is inviting to the eye; and the special paper makes it possible to keep each volume to a size and weight that make it easily carried—including to a classroom. Furthermore, the editorial materials—introductions, headnotes, footnotes—are terse but full, and designed to give the student the information needed, without pre-empting the interpretive function either of the student or the instructor. The "Selected Bibliographies" at the end of each volume provide guides to further readings and research, and complete the self-sufficiency of the anthology, which permits each of its selections to be read, understood, and placed in historical context without the need for access to a collection of reference books.

The editors have taken scrupulous care to provide the most accurate available version of each work that is represented. Indeed, several of the major texts—Franklin's *Autobiography*, some of the materials by Clemens, Howells's *Novel-Writing and Novel-Reading*, and *The Red Badge of Courage*—have been newly edited from the original manuscripts. And each text is printed in the form which accords, as closely as it is possible to determine, to the intentions of its author. There is one exception: we have modernized the spellings and (very sparingly) the punctuation in the section on early American literature, on the principle that nonfunctional features such as archaic spellings and typography pose unnecessary problems for beginning students. We have, however, since it is a new edition from the manuscript, left Franklin's *Autobiography* unchanged. For the convenience of the student, we have used square brackets to indicate titles supplied by the editors, and have, whenever a portion of a text has been omitted, indicated that omission by three asterisks.

The editors of this anthology were selected on the basis of their expertness in their individual areas, and also because they combine respect for the best that has been thought and said about literature in the past with an alertness (as participants, as well as observers) to the altering interests, procedures, and evaluations in contemporary scholarship and criticism. Each editor was given ultimate responsibility for his own period, but all collaborated in the total enterprise.

In preparing these volumes, we have incurred obligations to hundreds of teachers throughout the country who have answered our questions; we take this opportunity to thank them warmly for their invaluable assistance. Those teachers who prepared detailed critiques, or who offered special help in selecting or preparing texts, are listed under "Acknowledgments," on a separate page. The editors would like to express their appreciation to their own invaluable assistants: Jill Beerman, Mark Canner, Mary Eberle, Deborah Grossman, Mary Hathorn, William Kozlowski, Bea McLean, Patrick Merla, the staff of the Enoch Pratt Library, Heddy Richter (American Literature Librarian, Doheny Library, University of Southern California), Diane Rosenfeldt, and Tina Stough. The publishers would like, in turn, to express their thanks to Jennifer Sutherland, John W. N. Francis, Victor Schmalzer, and Neil Patterson, as well as to Diane O'Connor, Marjorie Flock, Nelda Freeman, Carol Flechner, Calvin Towle, Sue Lowe, Roy Tedoff, Hugh O'Neill, and James Mairs of Norton's production department; we also owe thanks to Valerie Eads, Karen Fischer, George J. Firmage, Mike McIver, and Barbara Zimmerman. Our greatest debt is to M. H. Abrams (Class of 1916 Professor of English at Cornell, and Norton's adviser on English texts), upon whose rich experience in making anthologies we drew often and profitably. All have helped us to achieve the task of representing adequately, in two convenient volumes, the extraordinary variety and quality of our American literary heritage.

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