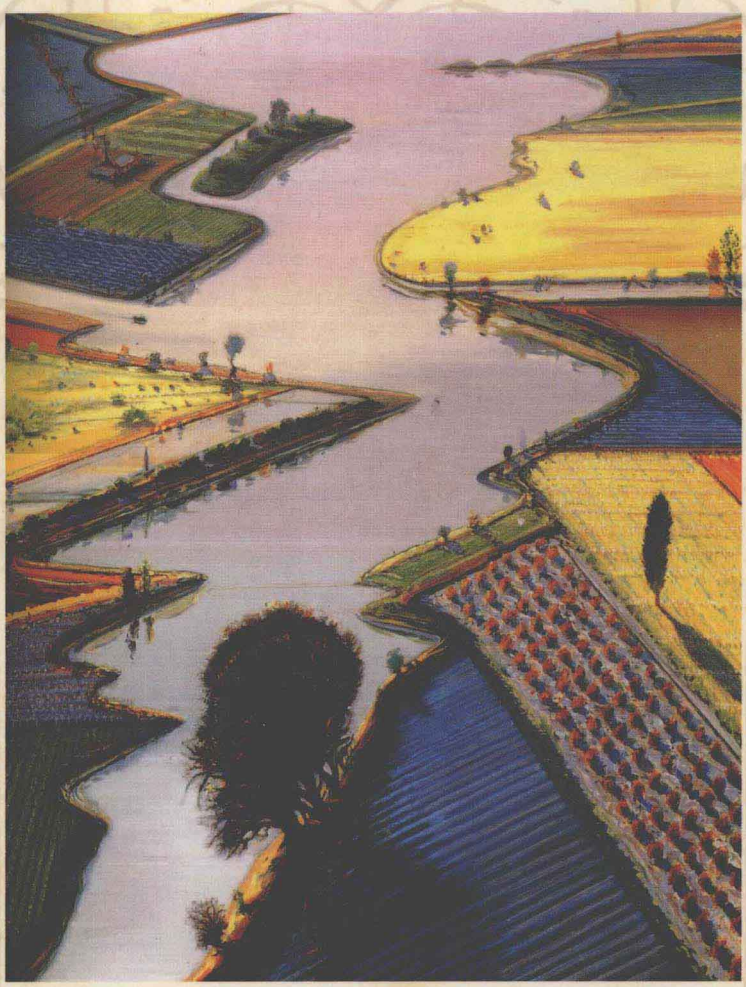
THE NORTON INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

eighth edition



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The Norton Introduction to

Literature

EIGHTH EDITION

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Preface

Through eight editions, *The Norton Introduction to Literature* has been committed to helping students learn to read and enjoy literature. This edition, like those before it, offers many different ways of building and reinforcing the skills of reading; in addition to studying literature in terms of its elements, our book emphasizes reading works in different contexts—authorial, historical, cultural, and critical. For this edition, we have provided many new selections and have strengthened our contextual groups by adding two new chapters. The first, "Cultural and Historical Contexts," focuses on F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Babylon Revisited" and discusses the cultural and historical climate that served as backdrop and inspiration for Fitzgerald's fiction. The second, "The Author's Work as Context: William Shakespeare," calls attention to stylistic and thematic currents running through Shakespeare's work and encourages students to read Shakespeare actively and critically.

The Eighth Edition, like its predecessors, offers in a single volume a complete course in reading and writing about literature. It is both an anthology and a textbook—a teaching anthology—for the indispensable course in which, together with a college teacher, a college student begins to read literature, and to write about it, seriously. To that end, we have added a new introduction, "What Is Literature?," which grapples with questions concerning the nature of literature, the value of reading it and writing about it, and the history of the canon.

The works are arranged in order to introduce a reader to the study of literature. Each genre is approached in three logical steps. Fiction, for example, is introduced by *Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing,* which treats the purpose and nature of fiction, the reading experience, and the first steps one takes to begin writing about fiction. This is followed by the seven-chapter section called *Understanding the Text,* in which stories are analyzed in terms of craft, the so-called elements of fiction; this section ends with "The Whole Text," a chapter that uses the analytical aids offered in the previous chapters, putting them together to view the work as a whole. The third section, *Exploring Contexts,* suggests some ways of seeing a work of literature interacting with its temporal and cultural contexts and reaching out beyond the page.

The sections on reading, analyzing, and placing the work in context are followed, in each genre, by guidance in taking that final and extremely difficult step—evaluation. *Evaluating Poetry,* for example, demonstrates how to assess the merits of two poems; rather than offering definitive judgments, a litmus test, or even a checklist or formula, it discusses ways of bringing to consciousness, defining, modifying, articulating, and negotiating one's judgments about a work of literature. *Evaluating Fiction* and *Evaluating Drama* have been further refined in this edition to guide students toward determining and declaring *on what basis* they make their evaluative judgments.

Ending the fiction and poetry sections, *Reading More* _____ is a reservoir of addi-

tional examples, for independent study or a different approach. The book's arrangement facilitates the reader's movement from narrower to broader questions, mirroring the way people read—wanting to learn more as they experience more.

In the section called *Writing about Literature,* we deal with both the writing process as applied to literary works—choosing a topic, gathering evidence, developing an argument, and so forth—and with the varieties of a reader's written responses, from copying and paraphrasing to analysis and interpretation. We explore not merely the hows but also the whats and whys. In addition, we discuss critical approaches, providing a basic overview of contemporary critical theory and an introduction to its terminology, and we cover the use and citation of secondary sources. This section, when coupled with the student research paper on page 572, provides a brief reference for writers of literary research papers.

The Eighth Edition includes sixty-four stories, fourteen of which are new; 440 poems, seventy-six of which are new; and sixteen plays, four of which are new.

In the fiction section, we have added stories by Jorge Luis Borges, Stephen Crane, Ralph Ellison, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Nadine Gordimer, James Joyce, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ursula K. Le Guin, Herman Melville, Lorrie Moore, Katherine Anne Porter, Carol Shields, Elizabeth Tallent, and William Carlos Williams.

The poetry section has been similarly infused with new selections by Virginia Hamilton Adair, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Richard Barnfield, Thomas Bastard, Jeanne Marie Beaumont, William Blake, Louise Bogan, Eavan Boland, Alan Bold, Francis William Bourdillon, Lee Ann Brown, Robert Browning, Robert Burns, Thomas Campion, Kelly Cherry, Marilyn Chin, Mary Coleridge, Billy Collins, Martha Collins, Emily Dickinson, John Donne, Stephen Dunn, Bob Dylan, David Ferry, Robert Frost, Susan Glickman, Jorie Graham, Emily Grosholz, Thom Gunn, Thomas Hardy, Robert Hayden, Seamus Heaney, Felicia Dorothea Hemans, Andrew Hudgins, Langston Hughes, Ben Jonson, John Keats, Yusef Komunyakaa, Dorianne Laux, D. H. Lawrence, John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Gail Mazur, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Marilyn Nelson, Willie Perdomo, Eden Phillpotts, Sylvia Plath, Thomas Randolph, Adrienne Rich, Christina Rossetti, Mary Jo Salter, Alfred Tennyson, Derek Walcott, Phyllis Wheatley, C. K. Williams, and W. B. Yeats.

New to the drama section are Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour,* Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House,* August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson,* and Paula Vogel's *How I Learned to Drive.*

We have retained our editorial procedures, which proved their usefulness in earlier editions. First of all, we have annotated the works, as is customary in Norton anthologies; our notes are informational and not interpretive, for their purpose is to help readers understand and appreciate the work, not to dictate a meaning or a response. Second, to avoid giving the impression that all literature was written at the same time, we have noted at the right margin after each selection the date of first book publication; or, when preceded by a *p,* first periodical publication; or, when the date appears at the left margin, the year of composition. Finally, in a glossary at the back we define the literary terms used throughout the book.

One exciting feature of *The Norton Introduction to Literature* isn't bound into the book itself. *LitWeb,* a Web-based companion to the text, prepared by Annette Woodlief of Virginia Commonwealth University, provides students and teachers with in-depth reading prompts and exercises designed to inspire creative reading of and writing about literature, as well as links to useful literary resources. To view this unique ancillary, visit *www.wwnorton.com/introlit.*

Also, because nearly any reading experience can be enhanced by an accompanying

listening experience, all copies of *The Norton Introduction to Literature* will include a CD audio companion, offering readings and performances in each of the genres.

In all our work on this edition, we have been guided by teachers in other English departments and in our own, by students who used the textbook and wrote us, and by students in our own classes. We hope that with such capable help we have been able to offer you a solid and stimulating introduction to the experience of literature.

The occasion of the Eighth Edition of *The Norton Introduction to Literature* is both a celebratory and a sad one. Two wonderful new editors, Alison Booth and Kelly Mays, have joined the editorial team for this edition, and readers will quickly see the enlarged vision and range, as well as extensive knowledge and sheer intelligence, that they bring to the study of literature. But we also suffered a powerful loss when—in January of 2000—founding editor Jerome Beaty died after a courageous fight against cancer. New and old, we all miss the wit, judgment, good humor, and constant challenge of his fierce and loving intelligence. His imprint will be here for editions to come.

Acknowledgments We would like to thank our teachers, for their example in the love of literature and in the art of sharing that love; our students, for their patience as we learn from them to be better teachers of literature; and our families, for their understanding when the work of preparing this book made us seem less than perfectly loving and attentive toward them.

We would also like to thank our colleagues, many of whom have taught our book and evaluated our efforts, for their constant encouragement and enlightenment. Of our colleagues, we would like especially to thank Jonathan Martin, Robert von Hallberg, Michelle Hawley, Anne Elizabeth Murdy, Janel Mueller, Vicky Olwell, Richard Strier, and John Wright (all at the University of Chicago); Gwin Griesbeck and the students in "Introduction to Literature" (University of Virginia); Franny Nudelman, Steve Arata, Christopher Jackson, Julie Pal, Matthew Davis, and Amanda French—as fellow teachers and collaborators in creating this edition—and the members of the Graduate Pedagogy Workshop in 1999 (University of Virginia). For their help in selecting papers by student writers, we would like to thank Geneva Ballard, Theresa Budniakiewicz, Rebecca S. Ries, and Avantika Rohatgi (all at Indiana University–Purdue University at Indianapolis), and Thomas Miller, Tilly Warnock, Lisa-Anne Culp, Loren Goodman, Brendan McBryde, and Ruthe Thompson (all at the University of Arizona). We also thank the students whose papers we include: Daniel Bronson, Geoffrey Clement, Willow D. Crystal, Teri Garrity, Meaghan E. Parker, Sara Rosen, Sherry Schnake, Kimberly Smith, Thaddeus Smith, Jeanette Sperhac, and Caryl Zook. For her work on the *Instructor's Guide,* we thank Kelly Hager, Simmons College.

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What Is Literature?

What is literature? Does it include: (a) a novel written by a French person in 1885, (b) a sermon delivered by a Scotsman in 1640, (c) a long poem developed orally by an ancient culture, (d) letters or diaries found in someone's attic, (e) the archive of an online chatroom, (f) the tape-recorded memories of Carolina sharecroppers, (g) a video documentary, (h) a horror movie, (i) all of the above? If you answered "all of the above," you're right. Of course, people could have interesting debates about particular examples or general kinds of works and whether they rank as literature. The list could go on, as well; you may have thought of other possibilities. Some people would stretch the definition of literature to include any kind of organized human expression, from ballet to advertising, that can be "read" in ways similar to the ways we read a story or a poem. Others would just say literature is anything cataloged under "P" in the Library of Congress system, and still others would hang onto a more familiar definition, something like "Literature is creative writing." This book can't define literature—no one can answer the question "What is literature?" once and for all—but it can help you come closer to your own definition of what literature is, how it works, and how some varieties of it have changed over time.

Before you opened this book, you probably could guess that it would contain the sorts of stories, poems, and plays you have encountered in English classes or in the literature section of a library or bookstore. Perhaps that suggests a working definition of literature: the three kinds of writing or genres that we select for *The Norton Introduction to Literature* form the heart of literature as it has been defined in schools and universities for over a century. Yet even in college classrooms literature often also includes works of nonfiction. You may be assigned essays or autobiographies in an English class; no one would object to calling these literature. *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines literature as "writing which has claim to consideration on the ground of beauty of form or emotional effect." The key elements in this definition may be *writing*—after all, the words *literature* and *letters* have roots in common—and *beauty* and *emotion*. But we sometimes use the word *literature* to refer to writing that has little to do with feelings or artful form, as in scientific literature—the articles on a particular subject—or campaign literature. And at least some of the nonfictional works studied in literature classrooms—Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail," for example—were originally intended as "campaign literature" of one sort or another.

Could literature, then, include *anything* written? Or could it include works that do not depend on written words? (Look back at examples f–h in the first paragraph; although each involves written transcripts or scripts, the media of audio- and videotape and film are nonverbal.) Every society has forms of oral storytelling or poetry, and some peoples do not write down the cherished myths and traditions that are their "literature." If you go on to take more classes in literature or to major in English or another language, you

might encounter texts that stretch the concept of literature still further: Web sites or performances, for example. As Alvin Kernan puts it in *The Death of Literature* (1990), literature has become "only . . . one among many . . . modes, print, television, radio, VCR, cassette, record, and CD, by which information can be assembled, organized, and transmitted effectively."

While Kernan and others worry that the ongoing expansion of literature may mean its death, the concept as we know it is fairly new. Two hundred years ago, before universities were open to women or people of color, a small elite of men studied the ancient classics in Greek and Latin, never dreaming of taking college courses about poetry or fiction or drama written in the modern languages they used every day. Before modern literature became part of the college curriculum, the word *literature* itself had to be invented. At first, it referred to the cultivation of reading or the practice of writing ("he was a man of much literature"). Only later did it refer to a specialized category of works. Over time, this category narrowed more and more, eventually designating only a special set of imaginative writings, particularly associated with a language and nation (as in "English," "American," or "French" literature). Roughly speaking, by 1900 a college student could take a course in English literature, and the syllabus would exclude most nonfictional forms of writing, from travel writing and journalism to biography, history, or philosophy. Literature had become a walled-in flower garden filled with works of beauty, pleasure, imagination.

Literature is not things but a way to comprehend things.

—NORMAN N. HOLLAND

Of course, that garden always had gates and doors out. For example, some early and mid twentieth-century literature professors studied Gibbon's histories or the essays of Carlyle and Emerson; others pursued their own kinds of scientific scholarship. But now, as you begin this introduction to literature in the twenty-first century, the walls of that garden have come down. Literature today generally encompasses oral and even visual forms (film and video being closely related to drama, of course); it takes in, as it did long ago, writings of diverse design and purpose, including nonfiction. As a twenty-first-century student of literature, you may feel the pleasure of reading the best imaginative writings of the past, hoping with the speaker of Keats's "Ode on Melancholy" to "burst Joy's grape against" your "palate fine." As a reader, you may learn to test your palate or taste for the beauty of language and form, the joy of stirring theme and action. Yet you may also discover a new joy in the expanding horizons of literature. The garden reserved for beautiful poetry, fiction, and drama is flourishing. In it, historically authenticated varieties are planted next to new hybrids, the ancient and exquisite bonzai tree next to that beautiful intruder some might call a weed—all there for you to notice and appreciate. But the fields beyond the unwalled garden are wild and inviting as well.

Though no book can fully represent every species in this flourishing garden, this collection can and will introduce you to both classic writers and fresh voices; to both tradition and experimentation. Since there has never been absolute, lasting agreement about *what* counts as literature, why not consider instead *how* and *why* we look at particular forms of expression? A song lyric, a screenplay, a supermarket romance, a novel by Toni Morrison or Thomas Mann, and a poem by Walt Whitman or Katherine Philips may each be interpreted *in a literary way* and may thus yield insights and pleasures. Honing your skills at this kind of interpretation is the primary purpose of this book. By learning to recognize how a story, poem, or play works, you should gain interpretative skills that you can take with you when you explore zones outside the garden of literature. Yet the best way to become *a person of much literature* is to enhance the skills you already have as a reader of poetry, fiction, and drama, three of the most important forms

of literature in its standard sense. Each work included here holds its own rewards of form and feeling, beauty and pleasure, but what makes the work *effective?* By learning the skills and strategies that help you defend your opinion of a work's effectiveness, you will be able to support your *evaluation* of any work.

BUT WHY READ LITERATURE? WHY STUDY IT?

In the opening chapters of Charles Dickens's novel *Hard Times* (1854), the Utilitarian politician Mr. Thomas Gradgrind warns the pupils at his "model" school to avoid using their imaginations. "Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life," exclaims Mr. Gradgrind to the schoolmaster, Mr. M'Chaokumchild. To press his point, Mr. Gradgrind asks "girl number twenty," Sissy Jupe, whose father performs in the circus, to define a horse. When she cannot, Gradgrind turns to Bitzer, a pale, lifeless boy who "looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white." A "model" student of this "model" school, Bitzer gives exactly the kind of definition to satisfy Mr. Gradgrind:

> "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs." . . . Thus (and much more) Bitzer. "Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind. "You know what a horse is."

Anyone who has any sense of what a horse is rebels against Bitzer's lifeless version of that animal and against the "Gradgrind" view of reality. Like The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, or like Dickens's own Ebenezer Scrooge, Gradgrind wants to kill the irrational spirit; he wants to deal only with material things that can be bought and sold and with qualities that can be measured and counted. As this first scene leads us to expect, in the course of *Hard Times* the fact-grinding Mr. Gradgrind learns that human beings cannot live on facts alone; that it is dangerous to stunt the faculties of imagination and feeling; that, in the words of one of the novel's more lovable characters, "People must be amused." Through the downfall of an exaggerated enemy of imagination, Dickens reminds us why we like and even *need* to read fiction.

Through the ages, people like Gradgrind have dismissed literature as a luxury, a frivolous pastime, or even a sinful indulgence. Pretending to agree with the Gradgrinds of the world, Oscar Wilde asserted that "all art is quite useless"; but by this Wilde was suggesting that beauty and pleasure are the sole aims of the arts, including imaginative literature. Others (including Dickens himself) have argued for a kind of middle ground between the positions of a Gradgrind or a Wilde, insisting that literature should and does instruct as well as entertain.

Wonderfully, instruction and delight often go hand in hand in our experience of literature: we learn from what delights us or what leads us to appreciate new kinds of delight. The pleasure of reading comes in many varieties, however, and sometimes the best pleasures require an effort that beginners tend to call pain. A lot of poetry, fiction, and drama, including some in this collection, is at first difficult for any reader to grasp. Twentieth-century writer and critic T. S. Eliot even went so far as to say that "literature must be difficult." The modern short story, a form that arose less than two hundred years ago and came of age in the twentieth century, thrives on compactness; oblique suggestiveness; emotional, intellectual, and moral ambiguity. The reader is invited to collaborate in creating its meanings, as if to dine at a gourmet table of small portions beautifully served, rather than grabbing the Big Gulp on the run. Meanwhile, works from centuries ago might seem to most contemporary readers to be written in a foreign language.

If we read literature only for pleasure, why would we bother with any piece of writing that requires such effort? One answer is that new kinds of literary pleasure open up through that effort. As we read more and more, we become able to extend ourselves further, like athletes who train for heavier weights or longer jumps with repeated practice. Another answer came from Wilde himself, for whom literature is of supreme importance precisely because it frees us from the utilitarian preoccupations and activities of daily life. We value literature (all art, really) for breaking the rules of the ordinary. In some kinds of written entertainment, we find immediate "escape," but even imaginative writing that is more difficult to read and understand than a John Grisham or Patricia Cornwell novel offers escape of a sort: it takes us beyond familiar ways of thinking. A realistic story, poem, or play can satisfy a desire for broader experience, even unpleasant experience; we can learn what it might be like to grow up on a Canadian fox farm, for example, or to clean toilets in the Singapore airport. We yearn for such knowledge in a very personal way, as though we can know our own identities and experiences only by overleaping the boundaries that usually separate us from other selves and worlds. As Wilde might have conceded, literature seems extremely *useful* in this respect.

Ultimately, it is impossible to separate knowledge from imagination, instruction from pleasure. For many ages, different peoples have affirmed that while imaginative writing may be like playing, such play is the closest we come to grappling with the complexity of life, the pressure and dread of death. Perhaps nothing is more important; perhaps literature is the very thing humanity can least afford to do without. Albert Einstein considered himself something of an artist: "Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." To approach that encircling vision, a person needs not only literacy but a comprehension of diverse writings and arts. A well-read person has powers of comprehension, perspective, reasoning, and insight that may be lacking in a person who relies on the daily media or on personal experience. Literature itself provides many examples of characters or even real people who gain a feeling of mastery as well as a claim to civil rights and respect through learning to read and to write. Take a famous episode in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1964). Malcolm X, in prison, with only an eighth grade education, realizes he needs to learn standard written and spoken English if he is to succeed as a leader. He begins by copying every word in the dictionary and soon moves to absorbing the books on history and religion in the prison's extensive library. What were the fruits of this labor? "I had never been so truly free in my life. . . . [A] new world opened to me, of being able to read and *understand*." Literacy and a wide knowledge of literature of various kinds can be a sort of franchise, like the vote, and can launch a career.

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

You may already feel the power and pleasure to be gained from challenging reading. Why not simply enjoy it in solitude, on your own free time? Because reading is only one of the activities involved in gaining a full understanding of literature. Literature has a history, and learning that history makes all the difference in the pleasure you can derive from literature. By studying different genres and different works from various times in history and from various national traditions—by becoming familiar with the conventions of writing a sonnet in seventeenth-century England or of writing a short story in 1920s America—you can come to appreciate and even love works that you might have disliked if you simply read them on your own. Discussing works with your teachers and other students, and writing about them, will give you practice in analyzing them in greater depth. A clear understanding of the aims and designs of a story, poem, or play never falls like a bolt out of the blue. Instead, it emerges from a process that often

involves comparing this work with other works of its genre, trying to put into words *how* and *why* this work had such an effect on you, and responding to what others say or write about it. One of the great benefits of a literature course is that your own writing, for any purpose, will improve. You will write more effectively because you have paid attention to the way authors use words and because you have tried to convey to *your* readers the way a particular writer's words—an image, a turn of phrase, a dramatic speech—have affected you.

Yet studying literature involves more than cultivating your own skills and insights. Reading can open worlds and change a person's life, but literature also has political effects (government censors through the ages have taken the power of literature very seriously). The international best-seller *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), for example, helped create such strong antislavery sentiments before the U.S. Civil War that Abraham Lincoln reportedly described its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe, as "the little lady who caused the big war." The personal and the political effects of literature intertwine. A sense of self and an identity as part of a group or a nationality are shaped and reinforced by respected traditions, and many groups and nations now try to recover and protect their own literary traditions rather than be misrepresented by the writings of others. Margaret Atwood has claimed that when Canadian literature was ignored, for instance, Canada itself seemed to have forgotten its identity. Since the 1970s, Canada and many other former colonies of European countries have recovered and developed thriving literatures of their own. Instead of one **canon**—or a single selective list of the most-recognized or -esteemed works—there are now many canons of literature written in English.

Americans and Canadians are not the same. . . . Put simply, south of you you have Mexico and south of us we have you.

—MARGARET ATWOOD

WHY NOT STICK TO THE CANON?

Although the definition of literature has changed across centuries, and opinions have differed about the value and function of various kinds of writing, until recently most people agreed that reading and studying the most revered authors and works of the past was an essential part of education. Controversy now rages about the canon, but the many heated arguments are too complex to review here. To simplify: defenders of the canon insist that only the study of "the best that is known and thought in the world" (in the words of the nineteenth-century poet and critic Matthew Arnold) can guide us to become better readers, thinkers, and writers. Critics of the canon tend to argue, instead, that we must enlarge or entirely abandon the canon if we are to achieve the goal of education: to broaden experience and to open minds. Defenders of the canon understandably fear that the best literature will be forgotten. Their critics express the equally valid fear that if we concentrate on only a traditional canon we neglect vast numbers of texts (many that were influential in their time and place) and, in the process, ignore vast stretches of human experience. They insist that we should both respond critically to *all* texts and scrutinize the standards by which certain works have been designated great. Many, however, believe that the most productive path

[The Native American] oral tradition . . . is the source of their identity as a people and as individuals. . . . When that wellspring of identity is tampered with, the sense of self is also tampered with.

—PAULA GUNN ALLEN

lies somewhere between extreme traditionalism and canon-bashing. A good grounding in traditional forms of literature prepares you both to encounter all varieties of human expression and to make your own informed decisions about the relative worth of particular forms and particular works.

Although this debate has many dimensions, it is often reduced to questions about which authors should be included in literature courses and anthologies: why Dryden and Pope but not Aphra Behn; why Ralph Ellison and not Zora Neale Hurston; why Joseph Conrad or Doris Lessing and not V. S. Naipaul or Bessie Head? *Whom* we publish and teach matters, because our choices convey certain messages about the many kinds of people who have made an art of writing. This collection represents a diverse array of authors both ancient and modern, but it does not treat an assortment of types of authors as an end in itself. The works included here are *good*—each after its kind is a splendid creation—but of course such a judgment of quality requires some supporting evidence. For this reason, many historical varieties of literature and many valid approaches to literary interpretation coexist here, and some added guidelines regarding the latter appear in the appendix "Critical Approaches." As you read, you can gather the most telling evidence, identify your own standards for judging texts, define your own approaches to interpreting them, and finally decide for yourself whether these works belong in the book or in your personal "canon." Because the pleasure of reading unfamiliar works depends so much on understanding changing conventions and historical contexts, the "contextual" chapters offer information on authors' lives, on time periods, on writing trends during those periods, and so on.

Debates about the canon and about whom we should include on the list of literary "greats" won't end soon, but such debates are only the latest version of a discussion as old as literature itself. Considering how recently literature was defined in the modern sense (as the artful, fictitious prose or poetry of a nation), it is all the more remarkable that we persist in wanting to read what was written as long ago as the fifth century B.C. (in this collection, Sophocles) or before the first permanent European settlements in North America (Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Defenders of a canon should find comfort both in the staying power of many works and in the fact that some alien weeds that seemed distinctly threatening at first have turned out to be lovely additions to the literary garden.

Each new technology that permits unsupervised communications with strangers raises fears about harmful effects on the young or uninitiated. In the early 1800s, many people decried the seductive influence of novel-reading, especially on girls. Such warnings closely resemble those we hear today about television, video games, and the Internet. By 1900, both the novel and the short story were recognized as forms of great artistic worth. Because standards of literary value inevitably change, we should keep an open mind about the possibility of modifying our own views. By 2050, the video games of the early 2000s may be considered an art form (as well as entertainment). Meanwhile, your children will still be able to appreciate, as you can, the great pleasures and insights at the imaginative heart of literature: short fiction, poetry, and drama.

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