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## Preface

It is a great pleasure to feel that I have been of some help to our dear students, and I am sorry that it took me a long time to write these two volumes. In fact, the task proved to be much more difficult and time-consuming than I could ever imagine. It could be much easier if I had relied on my own knowledge and views, and if I had ignored the limits imposed and written these two volumes in 5000 pages. But I was not supposed to give you my personal views. The main requirement in writing such books is objectivity on the part of the writer. One cannot ignore the bulk of modern scholarship, thousands of scholarly articles and books that must be read and incorporated into the survey book whenever needed. It does not mean that these two volumes are a servile imitation of modern critics. One has to remember T. S. Eliot's view that we are greater than the past because we are the past plus ourselves.

What our students need is literary sensitivity, something that makes them think, discover new ideas, and improve their knowledge, something to enlighten their paths and inform their judgement, not something like the extant literary histories that look like accounting books, giving facts and facts.

A student once said, "A sentence from *The Norton Anthology* is directly copied in the first volume." I am glad that I found one sentence of it worth copying. Would that I had found hundreds of such sentences, for the aim is to provide our students with the most scholarly materials. It also shows that I am not unaware of scholarly materials. I admire Dryden's view when he says that "Ben Jonson invaded authors like a monarch."

*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, which is forty years old, has now become a Bible to some of our students. It is, to begin with, a primary source with introductions intended for high school students. It is

true that M. H. Abrams, the general editor, is a great scholar, but we are not his slaves. Students are supposed to read scholarly materials to inform and direct their own judgement, not to take them for granted. Abrams's Harvard honors dissertation, which appeared in 1934 as a book called *The Milk of Paradise*, is no longer acceptable even to Abrams himself. His thesis is that opium dreams furnished material for Coleridge's '**Ancient Mariner**'. Elizabeth Schneider, in a book on Coleridge (1953), has proved that Abrams is wrong because opium dreams inspired none of Coleridge's poems. What is still interesting is the first chapter of Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp*, a chapter that is reprinted by David Lodge in his collection of essays on literary criticism. In that important chapter, Abrams explains the poetic theories, which I have quoted twice in this volume.

I repeat what I have already said in the 'Preface' to the first volume: the debts of these two volumes are too many. The significance of such books depends on their creditors. If I were to give footnotes or in-text notes, which are not usual in a literary survey, there could be several thousand citations. Very often a scholarly article or book is summarized in a couple of sentences, and for a comment on an important work, the best articles and books were consulted. In short, over a thousand books and articles are the creditors of these two volumes.

*The Survey of English Literature* functions mainly as a secondary source. Students in the two survey courses are supposed to read the primary sources, and read these two volumes to understand the poems.

Some chapters, included for the sake of unity, are not part of the survey syllabus; they belong to courses in drama, prose, literary criticism, and novel. I hope these two volumes may serve our undergraduate and graduate students as an encouraging guide in their study of English literature

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