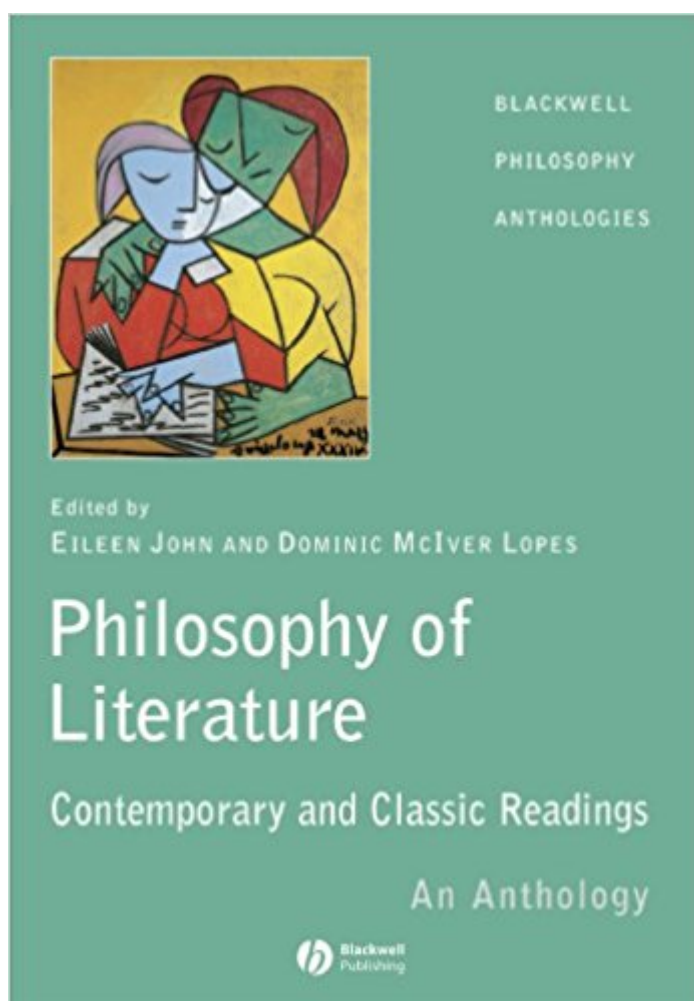


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# The Philosophy Of Literature: Contemporary And Classic Readings - An Anthology



## Synopsis

Essential readings in the philosophy of literature are brought together for the first time in this anthology. Contains forty-five substantial and carefully chosen essays and extracts Provides a balanced and coherent overview of developments in the field during the past thirty years, including influential work on fiction, interpretation, metaphor, literary value, and the definition and ontology of literature Includes an additional historical section featuring generous selections of the writings of early pioneers such as Plato, Aristotle, Nietzsche, and Hume Serves as an ideal introduction to the philosophy of literature or the philosophy of art, as well as a handy compilation of contributions to the field by its leading figures

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## Customer Reviews

"This collection provides an ideal introduction to the issues that draw analytic philosophers to literature. It brings together an extraordinary array of the most vital, influential, and sophisticated essays published by philosophers of literature in the past three decades." Stephen Davies, University of Auckland "These essays, taken together, constitute a serious and probing exploration of several of the most fundamental philosophical puzzles about literature. They are also accessible, engaging, and frequently a lot of fun. A superb collection!" Kendall Walton, University of Michigan

Forty-five essential readings in the philosophy of literature are brought together for the first time in this anthology to provide a balanced and coherent overview of developments in the field during the

past 30 years. They include substantial and carefully chosen essays and extracts which highlight influential work on fiction, emotion, interpretation, metaphor, literary value, and the definition and ontology of literature. An additional historical section features generous selections of the writings of early pioneers such as Plato, Aristotle, Nietzsche, and Hume. This authoritative volume offers a handy compilation of contributions to the field by its leading figures. It is an indispensable resource for anyone interested in the philosophy of literature or the philosophy of art.

I suppose you can't please everyone, but this anthology provides a good overview of the field. The essays chosen for inclusion are thoughtful and varied. Just take a look through the table of contents and you'll understand its breadth. Its first chapter pays homage to some classical thinkers and their works. It's a respectful gesture that proves the enduring importance of works like *The Republic*, written in another context and before the style of modern academia came into its own. The next chapters deal with how we define and classify literature. More focused segments on the components of literature itself follow. The collection manages to maintain coherence and focus, so you feel the works were chosen intentionally. Best of all, the texts are condensed to be more focused and straightforward. It's a gift to be able to actually get through a piece in one sitting. The end result is that you can cover a variety of subjects and navigate adjacencies as you please. The goal of philosophy instruction, as I see it, should be to encourage exploration. This book allows that, meanwhile giving students a working knowledge of notable theorists and their works. It's also a rather significant volume, with a great deal of different texts. I could see it being used as a catch-all reference for beginning and intermediate students of the field. It gives you the foundation you need to advance to more specialized books related to your interest or academic focus. Since it's clearly marketed as an anthology, I am not going to insult the editors by pointing out minutiae I would have liked to see included. Frankly, I am nowhere near the level of expertise necessary to do so. I would prefer a general overview to obscure and narrowly-targeted pieces that were frankly never intended for mass audiences, and would lose their intricacy if given a fleeting treatment. The font is readable and definitely aided by the two-column layout. Once again, the presentational approach foregrounds the content and gives it the attention it deserves. The book, because of its readability and core value, has deepened my interest in the field. I see reason for average people - especially those who value the arts in their daily lives - to pick this one up. It's thorough and comprehensive. It begs important questions about fiction, characterization, criticism, and more. Take a look, and think critically about what you read - in this volume, and everywhere else.

The size of this book and the subtitle give the impression that this book covers the whole field. It doesn't. This hodgepodge of Ordinary Language and other approaches to the philosophy of literature is not the whole picture. See "A Book Worth Reading" for a different and systematic approach to this new branch of philosophy. The articles in this anthology are almost all by philosophers who have only a passing knowledge of literature. The results are sophistic and at times sophomoric. Missing also are some famous contributions to the field, such as Sartre's *What is Literature?* a book which raises some serious problems for literature. Also, the work of John M. Ellis. If you can afford it, buy all four books. If not, you're better off with *A Book Worth Reading*.

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