



新编
20世纪

美国文学

选读

主
编 陈立华 王娜 孔令达

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前 言

美国文学属于世界上最年轻的文学，从其诞生至今仅有二百多年的历史。然而在这短短的二百多年间，美国文学却迅速冲出了欧洲文学的樊篱而成长为与世界其他伟大文学比肩而立的文学艺术，涌现出了一大批享誉世界的伟大作家，也产生了许多题材广泛、风格迥异的文学精品，为繁荣和发展世界文化与文学做出了重要贡献。作为英语专业的学生，美国文学课无疑是学习英语语言，欣赏英语文学作品，了解西方文化的一门必修课。然而长期以来，国内出版的许多美国文学教材常常从建国前殖民地时期的文学作品说起，讲到第一次世界大战为止。而美国文学是20世纪，尤其是在第一次世界大战后走向世界并称霸世界文坛的。为了与时俱进，让读者多接触更多现当代的文学作品，我们决定编撰一本20世纪美国文学选读，供专业教师做教材使用，也方便大学英语专业高年级学生、研究生及有一定英语基础的文学爱好者了解现当代美国文学和美国社会与文化发展的脉络，使其在增长知识的同时提高对文学的鉴赏能力。

《新编20世纪美国文学选读》是笔者根据多年教授该课程的教学实践和授课讲义，同时借鉴参考国内外多种同类教材，结合目前本课程授课时数的实际情况，反复筛选、精心编纂而成的。全书分为小说、诗歌、戏剧三大板块，精选了20世纪美国文学具有代表性的小说家、诗人、剧作家及其经典作品，比较全面地反映了美国20世纪的主要文学成就。在体例设计上，本着简单实用、可操作性强的原则，简明扼要，重点突出。每个章节均由作家生平介绍、主要作品介绍、对作家及其作品的简要评论、选文内容提要、选文及引导提问、注释、生词、课后练习等部分构成。

《新编20世纪美国文学选读》的特点之一在于，虽然此教材属于针对高年级学生、研究生及有一定英语基础的文学爱好者的高级文学读本，但实际操作性特别强。良好的教学效果是编写此书的首要目的之一，务求让老师们使用起来得心应手，学生们理解起来轻松自如。通常文学教材中的思考题部分是在选文后作为课后练习题出现的，但本教材创造性的突破是将问题揉入选文，以脚注的方式对每页的选文提出引导性的问题。这些问题具体到段落、句子甚至单词，大多关于选文内容细节，不难解答，但以小见大、深入浅出地将学生往主题立意等更深层次的问题上引导，达到开拓思维、增进理解的目的，给教师和学生都留有充分的思考空间和余地。

《新编20世纪美国文学选读》的另一个特点是，在作家的取舍方面，考虑得

比较周到全面。凡是已经成为经典的，如海明威、福克纳和菲茨杰拉德等小说家和艾略特、弗罗斯特等诗人，本书都有收录，而鉴于美国文学的多元化发展特点，我们所选的作家不仅在文学史上占有一定的地位，而且在主题、手法、文体风格或种族、性别等方面都有一定的代表性。比如其中托尼·莫里森和爱丽丝·沃克两位作家，就是美国黑人女作家中的翘楚，而亚瑟·米勒则是美国犹太裔剧作家的代表。

本书在立项、编写、审稿、统稿、定稿和出版等过程中，得到了中南财经政法大学外国语学院领导、学科带头人、武汉各大高校专业教师以及北京理工大学出版社工作人员的大力支持，在此，对他们表示衷心的感谢。由于编者水平所限，书中错误、缺点和考虑不周之处在所难免，恳切希望读者批评指正。

编 者

2013年1月

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Part One

Stories and Novels



Unit 1 F. Scott Fitzgerald

(1896—1940)

I. Life experience:

- 1896: born on September 24 in an upper-middle class family in St. Paul, Minnesota.
- 1912: enrolled at Princeton University.
- 1917: dropped out from college and enlisted in the army in 1917.
- 1918: met Zelda Sayre in Montgomery, Alabama.
- 1920: published his first novel *This Side of Paradise* and married Zelda Sayre.
- 1925: produced his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*.
- 1925 – 1926: met Ernest Hemingway in Paris.
- 1930: His wife suffered a mental breakdown, hospitalized at a sanatorium in Switzerland.
- 1940: died of a heart attack at Sheilah Graham's apartment in Hollywood, California.
- 1948: His wife died in a fire at the Highland Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina.

II. Major works:

- Novels: *This Side of Paradise* (1920) *The Great Gatsby* (1925)
Tender Is the Night (1930) *The Last Tycoon* (unfinished)
- Short story collections: *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920)
Tales of the Jazz Age (1922)

III. Brief comment on Fitzgerald and his works:

1. Fitzgerald is called the “Spokesman of the Roaring Twenties” not only because he himself is the leading participant of the 1920s but also because his writings vividly and truly picture the life of that time.
2. Subject matter: the upper class people's life, especially young rich people's life of 1920s.
3. Theme: the breaking up of the American Dream; people's new way of living in 1920s; postwar Americans' spiritual world, about their sense of loss, despair and disillusionment and so on.
4. Style: the use of a dramatic narrator; the ironic details; the heavy use of symbols;

the elegiac, sad but smooth language.

Introduction to *Babylon Revisited*:

F. Scott Fitzgerald is most famous for his novel *The Great Gatsby*. However, he is also a productive short story writer, publishing dozens of short stories in magazines. The best-received by the critics is his “Babylon Revisited,” which was written in December of 1930. In the story, the main character Charlie Wales, an American expatriate, revisited Paris where he once lived an extravagant and self-destructive life. But now he seemed to have a strong determination to start a new life. He returned to Paris just to regain custody of his daughter Honoria, who was currently staying with his sister-in-law Marion Peters and her husband. But unfortunately, Marion Peters didn’t trust Charlie and blamed him for her sister Helen’s death. So did Charlie really reform himself and become a trustworthy man? Could he get his daughter back at last? Do you want to know the answers? If so, read the following story immediately.

Babylon Revisited

F. Scott Fitzgerald

I

“And where’s Mr. Campbell?” Charlie asked. ①

“Gone to Switzerland. Mr. Campbell’s a pretty sick man, Mr. Wales.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. And George Hardt?” Charlie inquired.

“Back in America, gone to work.”

“And where is the Snow Bird?”

“He was in here last week. Anyway, his friend, Mr. Schaeffer, is in Paris.”

Two familiar names from the long list of a year and a half ago. Charlie scribbled an address in his notebook and tore out the page.

“If you see Mr. Schaeffer, give him this,” he said. “It’s my brother-in-law’s address. I haven’t settled on a hotel yet.” ②

He was not really disappointed to find Paris was so empty. But the stillness in the

① Task 1: Consider the opening line of “Babylon Revisited.” What is the effect of beginning a story with a conversation in this way?

② Task 2: Why did Charlie leave his address for Duncan Schaeffer at the beginning of the story?

Ritz bar was strange and **portentous** ①. It was not an American bar any more—he felt polite in it, and not as if he owned it. It had gone back into France. He felt the stillness from the moment he got out of the taxi and saw the doorman, usually in a **frenzy** of activity at this hour, gossiping with a *chasseur* by the servants' entrance.

Passing through the corridor, he heard only a single, bored voice in the once-clamorous women's room. When he turned into the bar he travelled the twenty feet of green carpet with his eyes fixed straight ahead by old habit; and then, with his foot firmly on the rail, he turned and surveyed the room, encountering only a single pair of eyes that fluttered up from a newspaper in the corner. Charlie asked for the head barman, Paul, who in the latter days of the bull market had come to work in his own custom-built car—disembarking, however, with due nicety at the nearest corner. But Paul was at his country house today and Alix giving him information.

“No, no more,” Charlie said, “I'm going slow these days.”

Alix congratulated him: “You were going pretty strong a couple of years ago.”

“I'll stick to it all right,” Charlie assured him. “I've stuck to it for over a year and a half now.”

“How do you find conditions in America?”

“I haven't been to America for months. I'm in business in Prague, representing a couple of concerns there. They don't know about me down there.”

Alix smiled.

“Remember the night of George Hardt's bachelor dinner here?” said Charlie. “By the way, what's become of Claude Fessenden?”

Alix lowered his voice confidentially: “He's in Paris, but he doesn't come here any more. Paul doesn't allow it. He ran up a bill of thirty thousand francs, charging all his drinks and his lunches, and usually his dinner, for more than a year. And when Paul finally told him he had to pay, he gave him a bad check.”

Alix shook his head sadly.

“I don't understand it, such a dandy fellow. Now he's all **bloated** up—” He made a plump apple of his hands.

Charlie watched a group of strident queens installing themselves in a corner.

“Nothing affects them,” he thought. “Stocks rise and fall, people loaf or work, but they go on forever.” The place oppressed him. He called for the dice and shook with Alix for the drink. ②

① Task 3: How did Charlie Wales find the Ritz bar? Why did he return to the bar?

② Task 4: Try to find more about the story's historical setting. How does the setting parallel the lives of the characters? What is the significance of the title as it relates to the setting?

“Here for long, Mr. Wales?”

“I’m here for four or five days to see my little girl.”

“Oh-h! You have a little girl?”

Outside, the fire-red, gas-blue, ghost-green signs shone smokily through the tranquil rain. It was late afternoon and the streets were in movement; the *bistros* gleamed. At the corner of the Boulevard des Capucines he took a taxi. The Place de la Concorde moved by in pink majesty; they crossed the logical Seine, and Charlie felt the sudden provincial quality of the Left Bank.

Charlie directed his taxi to the Avenue de l’Opera, which was out of his way. But he wanted to see the blue hour spread over the magnificent **facade**, and imagine that the cab horns, playing endlessly the first few bars of *La Plus que Lent*, were the trumpets of the Second Empire. They were closing the iron grill in front of Brentano’s Book-store, and people were already at dinner behind the trim little bourgeois hedge of Duval’s. He had never eaten at a really cheap restaurant in Paris. Five-course dinner, four francs fifty, eighteen cents, wine included. For some odd reason he wished that he had. ①

As they rolled on to the Left Bank and he felt its sudden **provincialism**, he thought, “I spoiled this city for myself. I didn’t realize it, but the days came along one after another, and then two years were gone, and everything was gone, and I was gone.” ②

He was thirty-five, and good to look at. The Irish mobility of his face was sobered by a deep wrinkle between his eyes. As he rang his brother-in-law’s bell in the Rue Palatine, the wrinkle deepened till it pulled down his brows; he felt a cramping sensation in his belly. From behind the maid who opened the door darted a lovely little girl of nine who shrieked “Daddy!” and flew up, struggling like a fish, into his arms. She pulled his head around by one ear and set her cheek against his.

“My old pie,” he said.

“Oh, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, dads, dads, dads!”

She drew him into the salon, where the family waited, a boy and girl his daughter’s age, his sister-in-law and her husband. He greeted Marion with his voice pitched carefully to avoid either feigned enthusiasm or dislike, but her response was more frankly tepid, though she minimized her expression of unalterable distrust by directing her regard toward his child. The two men clasped hands in a friendly way

① Task 5: Read through the story and use specific words to describe Charlie’s past life in Paris.

② Task 6: Interpret these two sentences.

and Lincoln Peters rested his for a moment on Charlie's shoulder.

The room was warm and comfortably American. The three children moved intimately about, playing through the yellow **oblongs** that led to other rooms; the cheer of six o'clock spoke in the eager smacks of the fire and the sounds of French activity in the kitchen. But Charlie did not relax; his heart sat up rigidly in his body and he drew confidence from his daughter, who from time to time came close to him, holding in her arms the doll he had brought.

"Really extremely well," he declared in answer to Lincoln's question. "There's a lot of business there that isn't moving at all, but we're doing even better than ever. In fact, damn well, I'm bringing my sister over from America next month to keep house for me. My income last year was bigger than it was when I had money. You see, the Czechs—"

His boasting was for a specific purpose; but after a moment, seeing a faint **restiveness** in Lincoln's eye, he changed the subject:

"Those are fine children of yours, well brought up, good manners."

"We think Honoria's a great little girl too."

Marion Peters came back from the kitchen. She was a tall woman with worried eyes, who had once possessed a fresh American loveliness. ^① Charlie had never been sensitive to it and was always surprised when people spoke of how pretty she had been. From the first there had been an instinctive **antipathy** between them.

"Well, how do you find Honoria?" she asked.

"Wonderful. I was astonished how much she's grown in ten months. All the children are looking well."

"We haven't had a doctor for a year. How do you like being back in Paris?"

"It seems very funny to see so few Americans around."

"I'm delighted," Marion said vehemently. "Now at least you can go into a store without their assuming you're a millionaire. We've suffered like everybody, but on the whole it's a good deal pleasanter."

"But it was nice while it lasted," Charlie said. "We were a sort of royalty, almost infallible, with a sort of magic around us. In the bar this afternoon"—he stumbled, seeing his mistake—"there wasn't a man I knew."

She looked at him keenly. "I should think you'd have had enough of bars."

^① Task 7: Pay attention to the detailed descriptions about the characters' appearance and see what kind of conclusions you can draw from these descriptions.

“I only stayed a minute. I take one drink every afternoon, and no more.”

“Don’t you want a cocktail before dinner?” Lincoln asked.

“I take only one drink every afternoon, and I’ve had that.”

“I hope you keep to it,” said Marion.

Her dislike was evident in the coldness with which she spoke, but Charlie only smiled; he had larger plans. Her very aggressiveness gave him an advantage, and he knew enough to wait. He wanted them to initiate the discussion of what they knew had brought him to Paris.

At dinner he couldn’t decide whether Honoria was most like him or her mother. Fortunate if she didn’t combine the traits of both that had brought them to disaster. A great wave of protectiveness went over him. He thought he knew what to do for her. He believed in character; he wanted to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element. Everything wore out.

He left soon after dinner, but not to go home. He was curious to see Paris by night with clearer and more judicious eyes than those of other days. He bought a *strapontin* for the Casino and watched Josephine Baker go through her chocolate arabesques.

After an hour he left and strolled toward Montmartre, up the Rue Pigalle into the Place Blanche. The rain had stopped and there were a few people in evening clothes disembarking from taxis in front of cabarets, and *cocottes* prowling singly or in pairs, and many Negroes. He passed a lighted door from which issued music, and stopped with the sense of familiarity; it was Bricktop’s, where he had parted with so many hours and so much money. A few doors farther on he found another ancient rendezvous and incautiously put his head inside. Immediately an eager orchestra burst into sound, a pair of professional dancers leaped to their feet and a maître d’hôtel swooped toward him, crying, “Crowd just arriving, sir!” But he withdrew quickly.

“You have to be damn drunk,” he thought.

Zelli’s was closed, the bleak and sinister cheap hotels surrounding it were dark; up in the Rue Blanche there was more light and a local, colloquial French crowd. The Poet’s Cave had disappeared, but the two great mouths of the Café of Heaven and the Café of Hell still yawned—even devoured, as he watched, the **meager** contents of a tourist bus—a German, Japanese, and an American couple who glanced at him with frightened eyes.

So much for the effort and ingenuity of Montmartre. All the catering to vice and waste was on an utterly childish scale, and he suddenly realized the meaning of the

word “dissipate”—to dissipate into thin air^①; to make nothing out of something. In the little hours of the night every move from place to place was an enormous human jump, an increase of paying for the privilege of slower and slower motion.

He remembered thousand-franc notes given to an orchestra for playing a single number, hundred-franc notes tossed to a doorman for calling a cab.

But it hadn't been given for nothing.

It had been given, even the most wildly squandered sum, as an offering to destiny that he might not remember the things most worth remembering, the things that now he would always remember—his child taken from his control, his wife escaped to a grave in Vermont.^②

In the glare of a *brasserie* a woman spoke to him. He bought her some eggs and coffee, and then, eluding her encouraging stare, gave her a twenty-franc note and took a taxi to his hotel.^③

II

He woke upon a fine fall day—football weather. The depression of yesterday was gone and he liked the people on the streets. At noon he sat opposite Honoria at Le Grand Vatel, the only restaurant he could think of not reminiscent of champagne dinners and long luncheons that began at two and ended in a blurred and vague twilight.

“Now, how about vegetables? Oughtn't you to have some vegetables?”

“Well, yes.”

“Here's *épinards* and *chou-fleur* and carrots and *haricots*.”

“I'd like *chou-fleur*.”

“Wouldn't you like to have two vegetables?”

“I usually only have one at lunch.”

The waiter was pretending to be inordinately fond of children. “*Qu'elle est mignonne la petite? Elle parle exactement comme une Française.*”

“How about dessert? Shall we wait and see?”

The waiter disappeared. Honoria looked at her father expectantly.

“What are we going to do?”

“First, we're going to that toy store in the Rue Saint-Honoré and buy you

① Task 8: What did Charlie mean by the word “dissipate”? What different kinds of dissipation do you see in “Babylon Revisited” on both a personal and global scale?

② Task 9: Go on reading carefully and try to describe Charlie's marriage life.

③ Task 10: Please use examples to prove Charlie's effort to reform himself.

anything you like. And then we're going to the vaudeville at the Empire."

She hesitated. "I like it about the vaudeville, but not the toy store."

"Why not?"

"Well, you brought me this doll." She had it with her. "And I've got lots of things. And we're not rich any more, are we?"

"We never were. But today you are to have anything you want."

"All right," she agreed resignedly.

When there had been her mother and a French nurse he had been inclined to be strict with; now he extended himself, reached out for a new tolerance; he must be both parents to her and not shut any of her out of communication.

"I want to get to know you," he said gravely. "First let me introduce myself. My name is Charles J. Wales, of Prague."^①

"Oh, daddy!" her voice cracked with laughter.

"And who are you, please?" he persisted, and she accepted a role immediately: "Honorina Wales, Rue Palatine, Paris."

"Married or single?"

"No, not married. Single."

He indicated the doll. "But I see you have a child, madame."

Unwilling to disinherit it, she took it to her heart and thought quickly: "Yes, I've been married, but I'm not married now. My husband is dead."

He went on quickly, "And the child's name?"

"Simone. That's after my best friend at school."

"I'm very pleased that you're doing so well at school."

"I'm third this month," she boasted. "Elsie"—that was her cousin—"is only about eighteenth, and Richard is about at the bottom."

"You like Richard and Elsie, don't you?"

"Oh, yes. I like Richard quite well and I like her all right."

Cautiously and casually he asked: "And Aunt Marion and Uncle Lincoln—which do you like better?"

"Oh, Uncle Lincoln, I guess."

He was increasingly aware of her presence. As they came in, a murmur of "... adorable" followed them, and now the people at the next table bent all their silences upon her, staring as if she were something no more conscious than a flower.

"Why don't I live with you?" she asked suddenly. "Because mamma's dead?"

① Task 11: Why did Charlie start a conversation with her daughter with such a formal introduction?