

英美文学_下

高等教育应用型本科重点专业精品规划教材（外语类）

English and American
Literature (Volume 2)

丛书总主编 冯光华

张 慧 李 杨 罗 莉 主编



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前言

《英美文学》是一本在新的社会历史文化语境下编写的、供独立学院英语专业本科生使用的教材。目前我国社会和高校对文学以及英语专业文学教育的观念发生了巨大变化，对英语专业文学课程的教学学时数、内容、手段和方法、教材编写与使用等都提出了更高的要求。随着时代的发展和文学观念的更新，国内外对于英美文学的认识也亟待更新，所以为中国大学生编写一本架构新颖、内容翔实的英美文学教材，成为了一项十分重要的任务。

为适应新时代高校文学教学的要求和文学史观的特点，也为了充分体现教材在文学教学和学术研究中的意义和价值，我们根据下列原则编写了本书。

第一，教材要反映出学科研究的整体水平，包含学科研究的主要内容。本教材的编写主要依据国外教材——耶鲁大学英语文学教授亨利·A·比尔斯（Henry A. Beers）为英语专业学生编写的《英美文学简史教程》（*Brief History of English and American Literature*）。《英美文学简史教程》的英文原版读本不仅能帮助国内学生全面系统地学习英语，同时，通过阅读书中的故事与文学作品，可以更好地感受英美历史文化，培养良好的阅读兴趣与品位，感受英语语言的魅力。国内的英美文学教材大多以作家为主，介绍他们的生平和作品以及对作品进行分析，很少有专门针对独立学院英语专业学生编写的英美文学教材。

第二，《英美文学》教材的编写要考虑独立学院的学生未来考研或出国深造的需求。此教材的编写不仅应体现文学常识的传授、作家作品的赏析以及文学修养的提高，还要注重不断激发和强化学习者的学习兴趣。因此，教材内容的选择以及练习的内容和方式应该符合学习者的认知过程和学习欲望，既要提供必要的文学常识和文本内容，又要提供大量的、充分的练习。练习是获得技能和能力的主要途径之一，是教材的主要部分，所以练习题的设计应生动有趣、形式多样。

第三，由于独立学院的学生学习的具体情况存在差异，因而教材的编写还要考虑学生的文化程度、学习目的、学习起点和教学学时。英语专业的培养目标是适应社会主义市场经济建设需要，培养具有扎实英语语言基础和较深厚英美文化知识的外语专业人才，因此，教材的编写还必须考虑学生未来就业的需要，让学生掌握必要的文学常识，学会赏析并评价外国文学名著。通过此项能力的培养，使学生能够将自己的学习能力自觉地应用于工作实践，有效地参与和英语相关的工作岗位，成为优秀的应用型和复合型高级专门人才。

综上所述,编写一本反映英美文学研究的主要内容、适合独立学院学生水平、符合英语专业培养目标、满足学生自主学习要求的《英美文学》教材势在必行。

本教材的主要特色是通过运用各种文学手段,比如小说的要素、诗歌的要素、戏剧的要素、修辞的讲解,使学生更好地理解外国文学原著,提供英美文学相关考试试题的解答技巧,提供文学课程论文和相关毕业论文的撰写思路。鉴于以上编写原则,本书的编写结构如下:每章包括背景介绍、作家及其作品和小结;每小节包括作者生平、主要作品、写作特色、作品节选及评论、思考问题、论文题目、小节测试、推荐读物、参考文献。

本教材由武汉工程科技学院外国语学院院长冯光华教授牵头,带领本校英语专业的优秀中青年骨干教师共同编写。参编人员包括张慧、李杨、罗莉、张培芳、刘丽、胡玲、黄亚楠、薛海琴、梅蓉、周凤华、殷彩桥。参加编写的副主编为武汉职业技术学院的黄晶晶。

英美文学具有独特的发展规律,成就辉煌,经典作品层出不穷。这也正是文学的独特魅力,但同时也给编者带来了不少困扰,比如文学史阶段的划分、作家和作品的取舍、文学流派的归属等问题。我们在借鉴国内外同类教材和相关著作的经验和优点的同时,也力图在视角、结构、体系、作家、作品选择和问题设计以及解答等方面都能体现新的时代特点。但是由于时间仓促,部分资料难寻,编者学术水平有限,不足之处敬请广大师生和学者批评指正。



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Chapter 1

The Romantic Period

Learning Objectives

After completing this unit, you will be able to do the following:

Identify the Romantic English literature.

Recognize the background information, literary terms, authors' life experiences, etc.

Analyze artistic features, diction, plots, characters, or comments of the literary works.

Realize the importance and impact of the literary works.

Literary Terms

In this chapter, you will learn the meanings of the literary terms listed below:

- The Romantic Period
- The American Renaissance
- The Romantic Movement
- Emersonian transcendentalism
- New England transcendentalism

Chapter Outline

The following are the main sections in this chapter:

1. Washington Irving
2. Ralph Waldo Emerson
3. Henry David Thoreau
4. Nathaniel Hawthorne
5. Herman Melville
6. Walt Whitman
7. Emily Dickinson
8. Edgar Allan Poe

Academic Vocabulary

The listed below are some words appearing in this chapter that you should make part of your vocabulary:

- Renaissance
- Civilization
- Christianity
- Frontiersman
- Recognition
- Capacity
- Intuitively

Looking Ahead

This chapter focuses on the Romantic Period, one of the most important periods in the history of American literature, stretching from the end of the 18th century to the outbreak of the Civil War. It started with the publication of Washington Irving's *The Sketch Book of Grayson Gent* and ended with Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Being a period of the great flowering of American literature, it is also called "American Renaissance". Foreign influences added incentive to the growth of romanticism in America. The Romantic Movement, which had flourished earlier in the century in Europe, proved to be a decisive influence without which the upsurge of American romanticism would have hardly been possible. The most clearly defined romantic literary movement in this period is the New England transcendentalism.

In this chapter, you will learn the background information of this period. Next, you will learn several writers and their literary works in the Romantic Period. Finally, you will learn how to analyze their artistic features, diction, plots, characters, or comments of their literary works.



Introduction

In the history of American literature, the Romantic Period was one of the most important periods. It stretched from the end of the 18th century to the outbreak of the Civil War. It started with the publication of Washington Irving's *The Sketch Book of Grayson Gent* and ended with Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. As it is a period of the great flowering of American



Thoreau Cove, Lake Walden

literature, it is also called "American Renaissance". The development of the American society nurtured "the literature of a great nation". The young Republic, with no heavy burden of the inherited past and history, was flourishing into a politically, economically and culturally independent country. Historically, it was the time of westward expansion. Economically, the whole nation was experiencing an industrial transformation, which affected the rural as well as the urban life. Politically, democracy and equality became the ideal of the new nation, and the

two parties system came into being.

With the founding of the American Independent Government, the nation was eager to have its own literary expression, to make its new experience that known other nations did not have: the early Puritan settlement, the confrontation with the Indians, the frontiersmen's life, and the Wild West. Besides, the nation's literary milieu was read for the movement characterized with imagination as well. Newspapers, magazines, journals, and book reviews appeared in ever-increasing numbers and a mature reading public constituted a great market. Thus, with a strong sense of optimism and the mood of "feeling good" of the whole nation, a spectacular outburst of romantic feeling was brought about in the first half of the 19th century.

Foreign influences added incentive to the growth of romanticism in America. The Romantic Movement, which had flourished earlier in the century in Europe, proved to be a decisive influence without which the upsurge of American romanticism would have hardly been possible. Foreign literary masters, especially the English counterparts, like Sir Walter Scott, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Byron, and Robert Burns exerted a stimulating impact on the writers of the new world. Therefore, American Romanticism was, in a certain way, derivative.

Although foreign influences were strong, American Romanticism exhibited from the very outset distinct features of its own. American Romanticism was in essence the expression of "a real new experience" and contained "an alien quality" for the simple reason that "the spirit of the place" was radically new and alien.

Then there was American Puritanism as a cultural heritage to consider. American moral values were essentially Puritan. Public opinion was overwhelmingly Puritan; the Puritan atmosphere of the nation predominantly conditioned social life and cultural taste. One of the manifestations was the fact that American romantic writers tended more to moralize than their English and European counterparts. Besides, a preoccupation with the Calvinistic view of original sin and the mystery of evil marked the works of Hawthorne, Melville and a host of lesser writers.

The most striking romantic literary movement in this period is the New England transcendentalism which was started by a group of people who were members of an informal club, i.e. the Transcendental Club in New England in the 1830s. This transcendentalist group included two of the most significant writers, Emerson and his young friend, Henry David Thoreau. Basically, transcendentalism has been defined philosophically as "the recognition in man of the capacity of knowing truth intuitively, or of attaining knowledge transcending the reach of the senses". Emerson once proclaimed in a speech, "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind". Other concepts that accompanied transcendentalism include the idea that nature is ennobling and the idea that the individual is divine and, therefore, self-reliant.

1. Washington Irving (1783-1859)

Washington Irving is unique to American literature in more ways than one. He did a number of things that have been regarded as the first of their kind in America. He was one of the first American writers to gain international fame, and regarded as Father of the American short stories or even American literature. The short story as a genre in American literature probably began with his *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*. This book also marked the beginning of American Romanticism.



I. Chronology

- 1738 Washington Irving was born in New York City, the youngest of eleven children of a wealthy merchant. From a very early age he began to read widely and write juvenile poems, essays, and plays.
- 1798 Irving ceased his formal education and began the study of law, but he had little relish for such a burdensome task. He loved writing more.
- 1802 He made his literary debut with a series of observational letters to *The Morning Chronicle*, written under the pseudonym Jonathan Oldstyle.
- 1804-06 He traveled in Europe.
- 1809 Irving finished his first book *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, which was a tremendous success.
- 1815 He went to England for the family business. When he failed, he had to write to support himself. With the publication of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* in 1819, he won a measure of international recognition.
- 1826 As an American diplomatic attaché, he was sent to Spain where he gathered material for his *The History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828), *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829) and *The Alhambra* (1832).
- 1829-32 He was Secretary of the United States Legation in London.
- 1833-59 When he was about fifty, after an absence of seventeen years, he returned to America and bought Sunnyside, his famous home on the Hudson River at Tarrytown. There he spent the rest of his life, except for a period of four years (1842-1846) when he was away from home as Minister to Spain, living a life of leisure and comfort. He continued to publish regularly—and almost always successfully—throughout his life, and completed a five-volume biography of George Washington just eight months before his death, at age 76, in Tarrytown, New York.

II. His major works

In late 1809, while mourning the death of his seventeen year old fiancée Matilda Hoffman, Irving completed work on his first major book, *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, which, written under the name of Diedrich Knickerbocker, was a great success and won him wide popularity. The book is a parody of the Dutch colony, in which Irving ridicules the human activity by combining true history with imagination, with a good deal of reference to contemporary events and personalities, particularly political ones. With the publication of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* in serials between 1819 and 1820, Irving won a measure of international fame on both sides of the Atlantic. The book contains familiar essays on the English life and Americanized versions of European folk tales like “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.” Geoffrey Crayon is a carefully contrived persona and behind Crayon stands Irving, juxtaposing the Old World and the New, and manipulating his own antiquarian interest with artistic perspectives. Following *The Sketch Book*, Irving published *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), and *Tales of a Traveler* (1824), both of which lacked the creative energy and appeal of *The Sketch Book*.

In all his life, Irving never stopped writing, yet none of them could acclaim the same admiration and recognition as *The Sketch Book* did. Of all the tales, “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” have been so famous and enduring in the history of American literature that they have become part of the American cultural tradition.

III. His artistic features

Irving was a highly skillful writer. The gentility, urbanity, and pleasantness of the man all seem to have found adequate expression in his style. There are quite a few striking features in his writings. First, Irving avoids moralizing as much as possible; instead, he wrote to amuse and entertain. Second, he is good at enveloping his stories in an atmosphere, the richness of which is often more than compensation for the slimness of plot. His characters are vivid and true. His humor is such that reading him, it is not difficult to smile and occasionally even chuckle. At last, the finished and musical language (indeed some people read Irving just for the music of his language) and the patent workmanship have been among the points of critical attention for a long time. He is worth the honor of being “the American Goldsmith” for his literary craftsmanship.

IV. Selected readings

Rip Van Winkle

(The excerpt below is taken from the story, describing for us Rip's difficulties at home, which he often escapes by going to the local inn to spend his time with his friends and sometimes by going hunting in the woods with his dog, and then focusing on Rip's return from his 20 years sleep to his greatly altered home village. Here, Irving's pervasive theme of nostalgia for the unrecoverable past is at once made unforgettable.)

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence (1). Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley (2) from his wife; so that he was fain to draw off his forces (3), and take to the outside of the house (4)—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much hen-pecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broom-stick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village; which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of His Majesty George the Third (5). Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands

from some passing traveler. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto (6) were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sundial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds; and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant (7) wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquility of the assemblage and call the members all to naught (8); nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape cholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness from the labor of the farm and clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet (9) with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it (10); but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

Notes

(1) household eloquence: Dame Van Winkle keeps chiding Rip.

(2) volley: number of questions directed at sb.

(3) draw off his forces: give up.

(4) take to the outside of the house: leave the home so as to avoid her chiding.

(5) the Majesty George of the Third: the British King George the Third.

(6) junto: ruling committee.

(7) termagant: noisy, quarrelsome woman.

(8) call the members all to naught: ruin and dismiss the party.

(9) wallet: knapsack.

(10) thy mistress...of it: your mistress makes you live a wretched and unpleasant experience.

Comments

First of all, Rip's dream is "the other American dream", one that stands in contrast to the popular myth that America is the Promised Land where honey and milk flow. Instead of indulging us in this blind optimism, this dream focuses on Rip's confused state of mind upon waking from his 20-year slumber. He was perplexed as we are: *How could everything have changed overnight?* However, as a metaphor, it really says this: Many Americans were so confused about the changes brought about by the American Revolution that they, like Rip, felt they were 20 years behind. The confusion is a true reflection of the psychological difficulty Americans at the time felt in understanding their own recent national history.

How then did the United States as a new nation begin? With the tale, we might suggest that it began, psychologically, in bewilderment about the nation being so new. His own words was this, "Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?" When he was sure that no one knew him, he said, "I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's someone else, got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!" In this situation, Rip was both Hamlet and Adam. Like Hamlet, he wondered who he was. Like Adam, he had a dream and woke up changed.

The tale introduces a doubtful Rip but it ends with a Rip willing and happy to embrace the newness of the American nation. Like Rip, Americans at the time had to be shocked into realizing that they were citizens of a new nation just created, that the past would now exist in memories and story-telling, and that they had to invent and tell new stories. It was with the identity and awareness of a new citizen that Rip preferred "the rising generation".

V. Essay questions with answers

1. Rip was the first American story-teller created in a literary text, and as a storyteller he resembles his author, Washington Irving. How do you understand that this tale of dream reveals much about Irving's own creative process and the literary production in America at the time?

Answers: There are two storytellers, Rip and Irving, and the parallels between them are quite meaningful. Because Rip was able to adapt himself to the changes, he became a storyteller who told of "the chronicle of the old times before the war". Indeed, he himself changed for the better, from an unsuccessful farmer to someone who had now found his own vocation as a kind of American artists. It is through his disturbing dream that he rediscovered

his real talent. His imagination—his dream, that is—is historically based and aesthetically effective. As a chronicler, he was the kind of artist that the country needed to bridge the gap between the past and the present so as to create a national history and culture. As Rip surveyed his surrounding upon waking up he found that the geographical place remained the same: there stood the same Kaatskill Mountains and the Hudson River flowed the same. This was the space that the new nation saw. Yet, the other changes were profound: King George III in red was part of the bygone; in his stead there was the portrait of another George, George Washington wearing a blue uniform who embodied the new thinking and new political discourse: rights of citizens, elections, members of congress, liberty, Bunker's Hill and heroes of the 1870s.

2. To the discerning eye, the story of Rip Van Winkle came from a German folktale. The German original contains such elements such as a journey of going 20 years into the future, the use of supernatural, the truth to the unknown, and encounters with the townspeople. Irving made it American by translating it into the American historical context and by giving it American features. Was Irving trying to conceal the tale's German origin by telling us the Rip came from a line of gallant Dutch ancestors? Isn't that a lie?

Answers: It is and it is not, like everything else in the tale. There is first of all the intended humor: Rip was Dutch but was significantly weaker than his gallant Dutch ancestors, as he had been living in American a bit too long. One almost could not have guessed he was Dutch, and most of the inhabitants in the New York area or the Hudson region were Dutch. Remember how Irving's narrator teases us by telling us that he had found the story in the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker who had a great deal of research interest in the Dutch history in the Hudson region? Mr. Knickerbocker's interest should be in the interest of all New Yorkers and Americans, for they have a stake in connecting themselves to the past, to their ancestry. At any rate, we have three cultural elements naturally blended into this tale: German, Dutch and American. The tale, like numerous other tales in American literature, is intercultural.

3. The creation of Rip Van Winkle as a prototypical American male presents some problems from a feminist point of view. Feminist critics point out that the humor of the tale is achieved at the expense of Rip's wife, Dame Van Winkle. How do you understand that?

Answers: Rip's newly acquired independence is not so much from the tyranny of England or the patriarch in the village (Nicholas Vedder, landlord of the inn) but from the yoke of his wife who is, conveniently, dead and disappears for Rip's peace of mind. Because of the influence the tale has on later generations of male writers, gender-conscious critics identify it as the origin of an androcentric narrative type. Critic Leslie Fiedler believes that the first American tale is one in which a man runs away from his wife and from marriage so as to maintain his child-like maturity. Therefore, the freedom Rip seeks and finds is not so much political freedom but one related to male infantile fantasy. Harsh criticism indeed, but true to