

VOLUME 2

HISTORY AND ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

美国文学史 及选读

第二册

外语教学与研究出版社

Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press

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吴伟仁 编

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前 言

我国高等院校英语专业在高年级课程中，开设有《英美文学史》和《英美文学作品选读》两门课程。讲授《文学史》以伴随《文学作品选读》为宜。因为文学史是根据历史的顺序以系统讲授为主，由于课时的限制，往往重头轻尾，完不成全面教学的任务。《文学作品》的讲授，由于课时限制，只能选一部分重要作家和重要作品进行讲授，略古详今。这样，史和选读分作两门课程讲授，往往不能相辅而行，容易形成脱节和重复，从时间上说，有不经济课时的情况。因此，这两门课程，最好是史选结合起来，史的部分在书中简明扼要地概述，作家作品部分，尽可能遴选文学史上的重要作家和重要作品进行讲授，教师根据班级的具体情况，可多选，也可少选，灵活掌握，进行调整。

本书编写的体例，除史的部分有简略扼要的叙述以外，作家作品部分有：（1）作家生平与创作介绍；（2）作品内容提要（如选文为作品节录时）；（3）选文；（4）注释。在教学中每周以4学时计，共两个学期（有的院校是四个学期），课堂以讲授作品为主，史的部分由教师掌握，供学生参考，史选结合，进行教学，可事半功倍，收到良好的教学效果，这是编写本书的目的之一。

本书编选分为两册（第一册是古代至浪漫主义时期美国文学，第二册是现实主义时期至20世纪美国文学）。

本书可供高校外文系英语专业作英美文学史和文学作品选读的教学用书或参考书，也可供广大中学英语教师及具有一定程度的英语自学者和英美文学爱好者作为进修读物。

本书定稿前，曾由国家教委高校外语教材编审委员会召开审稿会。参加审稿会的有主审人山东大学的张健教授、审稿人北京师范大学的孟广龄教授、南开大学的常耀信教授和山东大学的李乃坤副教授。会议期间，审稿人提出了许多有关作家、选文和注释方面的宝贵意见。编者根据这些意见，作了必要的修改。在此，对参加审稿的同志表示衷心的感谢。

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，恳切希望批评指正。

编 者
1987年6月

内 容 简 介

我国高等院校（包括师专和教育学院）英语专业在高年级课程中开设有《英美文学史》和《英美文学作品选读》两门课程，讲授《文学史》以伴随《文学作品选读》为宜，二者相辅而行，否则容易形成脱节现象。因此编辑一部文学史和文学作品选读相结合的教材，是有必要的。

这部史选结合的教材，提供高等院校英语专业高年级使用。史的部分在书中只做了简明扼要的概述，作家作品部分有：（1）作家详细介绍；（2）作品内容提要（如选文为作品片断时）；（3）重点文选，略古详尽；（4）注释。在教学中课堂以讲授作品为主，史的部分由教师掌握，供学生参考。史选结合，进行教学，可事半功倍，收到良好的教学效果，这是本书编写的目的。

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PART IV

THE LITERATURE OF REALISM

Historical Introduction

Political Background. By the end of the Civil War (1861—1865) most of the forces that would typify twentieth-century America had begun to emerge. Northern industrialism had triumphed over Southern agrarianism, and from that victory came a society based on mass labor and mass consumption. Mechanization spread rapidly as steam engines, linked to machines, displaced hand work on farms and in factories. The conditions of labor changed, for the new machines, with their great cost and efficiency, seemed far more valuable and more useful than the workers who tended them. Yet increasing numbers of Americans left the farms to seek jobs in urban factories.

In the cities, swollen with growing numbers of the poor and the unskilled, angry forces were stirring that would profoundly alter the nation's politics and its social ideals. Traditional political alliances had begun to shift and the lower classes sought greater power at the polls. The great age of big-city bossism began, and the art of political patronage and graft rose to new heights throughout the land. During the Civil War the powers of the federal government rapidly expanded. The first conscription laws were passed, the first federal income taxes were levied, and

a national currency, controlled by the federal government, was issued. In 1865 the first step toward racial equality was made when the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was adopted, abolishing slavery within the United States. Business growth and exploitation of natural resources created new wealth, concentrating vast riches and economic power in the hands of a few. It was the beginning of what Mark Twain called "The Gilded Age," an age of excess and extremes, of decline and progress, of poverty and dazzling wealth, of gloom and buoyant hope.

In the first decades after the Civil War, Americans ceased to be isolated from the world and from each other. Telegraphlines spanned the nation, and in 1866 a trans-Atlantic cable joined America and Europe. The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, linking the Atlantic and the Pacific. Soon the United States had the most extensive railroad system in the world, which in turn generated enormous commercial expansion. The cost of transporting raw materials and finished goods dropped. Products once made locally by costly handwork were replaced by inexpensive goods.

The tempo of life accelerated as Americans became increasingly mobile. Journeys of weeks or months were reduced to a few days. In the last surge of westward expansion, Americans, lured by the promise of free land, settled the last of the first forty-eight states. By 1890 the frontier, the westward moving line of settlement begun three hundred years before on the Atlantic Coast, ceased to exist. Yet its influence would long remain, shaping the life of the nation and inspiring the legends, novels, and western movies by which the world would come to know America.

The period between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of World War I was a time of steel and steam, electricity and oil. Steel production in the United States increased more than six hundred times, and steelmaking became the nation's dominant industry. Alternating electrical current was introduced (1886). Incandescent lamps illuminated the cities with electricity provided by giant, steam-driven dynamos. The tallow candles and whale-oil lamps of rural America were replaced by lanterns filled with kerosene made from crude oil. The American petroleum industry began, and with it came the age of the automobile.

From 1870 to 1890 the total population of the United States doubled. Villages became towns, towns became cities, and cities grew to a size and with a speed that would have astonished the Founding Fathers. From 1860 to 1910 the population of Philadelphia tripled, that of New York City more than quadrupled, while the population of Chicago increased twenty times to two million, making it the nation's second largest city.

As the population doubled, the national income quadrupled, and by the mid-1890s the United States could boast 4 000 millionaires. The rich prospered mightily, and immense power came to such industrial and banking magnates as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. Pierpont Morgan. Yet the growth of business and industry also widened the gulf between the rich and the poor, giving rise to reform movements and labor unions that voiced the grievances of debt-ridden farmers and of immigrant workers living in city slums and laboring in giant, impersonal factories. It was a time of radiant prospects, when ministers preached (and congregations believed) a gospel of wealth, sug-

gesting that riches were at last in league with virtue and the age of unlimited progress had finally dawned.

Increased wealth, and the desire for its conspicuous display, gave rise to a gingerbread era of American design whose prime function was to attract attention. American millionaires built Gothic and Romanesque mansions and decorated them with towers, domes, columns, stained-glass windows, and ornamental gim-racks of wood and iron. Their rooms were filled with art imported from Europe, as were most symbols of culture. Well-to-do Americans adopted European dress styles and manners, sent their sons to Europe for an education, and eagerly married off their daughters to European noblemen.

Literary Characteristics of the Age. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, women became the nation's dominant culture force, a position they have never relinquished. Ladies' journalism began to flourish. In 1891, *The Ladies Home Journal* (founded in 1883) became the first American magazine to exceed a circulation of half a million; by 1905 it had reached a million. A new generation of women authors appeared whose poetry and fiction enlivened the pages of popular ten-cent monthly and weekly magazines. The greatest woman writer of the age, Emily Dickinson, was almost completely unknown; her first collection of poetry was not published until 1890, four years after her death. But Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), had become an American institution and the most famous literary woman in the world. The American reading public's appetite for sentiment and sensation was constantly fed by such writer as Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, who filled uncountable numbers

of novels with romantic extravagance; ancestral curses, sudden passions, villains blasted, and heroes triumphant. Sales of such "molasses fiction" far exceeded the sales of works by such highly regarded writers as William Dean Howells, Edith Wharton, Henry James, and even Mark Twain.

Although Americans continued to read the works of Irving. Cooper, Hawthorne, and Poe, the great age of American romanticism had ended. By the 1870s the New England Renaissance had waned. Hawthorne and Thoreau were dead; Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes, and Whittier had passed their literary zeniths. Melville, living in obscurity, had ceased to publish his fiction. Only Whitman continued to offer a new literary vision to the world, issuing a fifth edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1870 and publishing *Democratic Vistas* in 1871. As New England's cultural dominance declined, New York replaced Boston as the nation's literary center, drawing writers from New England, the South, and the West to the publishing houses and periodicals of the nation's largest city. From 1865 to 1905 the total number of periodicals published in the United States increased from about seven hundred to more than six thousand to satisfy the demands of a vast new reading audience that was hungry for articles, essays, fictions, and poems.

A host of new writers appeared, among them Bret Harte, William Dean Howells, Hamlin Garland, and Mark Twain, whose background and training, unlike those of the older generation they displaced, were middle-class and journalistic rather than genteel or academic. Influenced by such Europeans as Zola, Flaubert, Balzac, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy, America's most note-

worthy new authors established a literature of realism. They sought to portray American life as it really was, insisting that the ordinary and the local were as suitable for artistic portrayal as the magnificent and the remote.

As in most literary rebellions, the new literature rose out of a desire to renovate the literary theories of a previous age. Realists had grown scornful of artistic ideals that had been trivialized, worn thin by derivative writers eager to supply the "great popular want" for sentiment, adventure, and "tingling excitement." In contrast, the realists had what Henry James called "a powerful impulse to mirror the unmitigated realities of life." Earlier in the nineteenth century, James Fenimore Cooper had insisted on the author's right to present an idealized and poetic portrait of life, to avoid representations of "squalid misery." But by the last of the nineteenth century the realists, and the literary naturalists who followed them, rejected the portrayal of idealized characters and events. Instead, they sought to describe the wide range of American experience and to present the subtleties of human personality, to portray characters who were less simply all good or all bad.

Realism had originated in France as *réalisme*, a literary doctrine that called for "reality and truth" in the depiction of ordinary life. "Realism" first appeared in the United States in the literature of local color, and an amalgam of romantic plots and realistic descriptions of things was immediately observable: the dialects, customs, sights, and sounds of regional America. Bret Harte in the 1860s was the first American writer of local color to achieve wide popularity, presenting stories of western mining

towns with colorful gamblers, outlaws, and scandalous women. Thereafter editors, ever sensitive to public taste, demanded, and such writers as Harte, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Kate Chopin, Joel Chandler Harris, and Mark Twain provided, regional stories and tales of the life of America's Westerners, Southerners, and Easterners. Local color fiction reached its peak of popularity in the 1880s, but by the turn of the century it had begun to decline as its limited resources were exhausted and as its most popular writers grew tediously repetitious or turned to other literary modes.

The arbiter of nineteenth-century literary realism in America was William Dean Howells. He defined realism as "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material," and he best exemplified his theories in such novels as *A Modern Instance* (1882), *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890). Howells spoke for a generation of writers who attempted to sustain an objective point of view and who found their subject matter in the experiences of the American middle class, describing their houses, families, and jobs, their social customs, achievements, and failures. The bulk of America's literary realism was limited to optimistic treatment of the surface of life. Yet the greatest of America's realists, Henry James and Mark Twain, moved well beyond a superficial portrayal of nineteenth-century America. James probed deeply at the individual psychology of his characters, writing in a rich and intricate style that supported his intense scrutiny of complex human experience. Mark Twain, breaking out of the narrow limits of local color fiction, described the breadth of American experience as no