

BEYOND CONCEPT

超越概念——高等院校英语专业系列教材

总主编 ◎ 何其莘 [美] 杨孝明

A HISTORY OF
AMERICAN
LITERATURE

美国文学史 (上)

主 编 ◎ 陈世丹 屈晓丽

 中国人民大学出版社

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前言

《美国文学史》(上、下)全面、系统地描述了自17世纪以来各个历史时期的美国文学:17世纪殖民地时期的美国文学、18世纪革命与理性时期的美国文学、19世纪浪漫主义时期的美国文学、19世纪现实主义时期的美国文学、20世纪现代主义时期的美国文学和第二次世界大战后1945年以来的后现代主义时期的美国文学。本书选择 Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville 和 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 为19世纪浪漫主义时期美国文学的代表作家; Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, Henry James, Edith Wharton, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser 和 Willa Cather 为19世纪现实主义时期美国文学的代表作家; Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner 和 Eugene O'Neill 为20世纪现代主义时期美国文学的代表作家; Robert Frost, F. Scott Fitzgerald 和 Arthur Miller 为20世纪现代主义文学繁荣时期仍坚持现实主义文学创作的代表作家。第二次世界大战后1945年以来的美国文学虽然有 Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, John Updike 和 Joyce Carol Oates 等著名作家仍在坚持现实主义和现代主义小说创作,但从整体上看,后现代主义文学占主导地位。因此,本书选择 Robert Lowell, Charles Olson, Joseph Heller, Kurt Vonnegut, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, Vladimir Nabokov 和 Toni Morrison 作为后现代主义文学的代表作家。后现代主义是西方后工业社会、后现代社会、晚期资本主义的文化现象,对于我们仍处在农业社会、前工业社会、前现代社会的大多数中国读者来说还是一个比较陌生的概念。这些后现代主义作家的作品表现出后现代主义的核心观念:在今天的世界里,各种各样不稳定、不确定、非连续、无序、断裂和突变现象的重要作用越来越为人们所认识并重视。在这种情况下,一种新的看待世界的观念开始深入人们的意识:它反对用单一的、固定不变的逻辑、公式和原则以及普适的规律来说明和统治世界,主张变革和创新,强调开放性和多元性,承认并容忍差异。当今的时代已放弃了制订统一的、普遍适用的模式的努力,新的范畴如开放性、多义性、无把握性、可能性、不可预见性等已进入后现代的语言。在后现代,彻底的多元化已成为普遍的基本观念;后现代的多元性是一切知识领域和社会生活各方面的本质。这种多元性原则的直接结论是:反对任何统一化的企图;后现代思维积极维护事物的多样性和丰富性,坚决反对任何试图将自己的选择强加于别人、使异己的事物屈服于自己意志的霸权野心;它尊重并承认各种关于社会构想、生活方式以及文化形态的选择。后现代主义文学以多元变化的不断创新的叙事技巧和多样杂糅的文本结构表现后现代人类经验,揭示现实与历史的文本性和不确定性。

编写本书的目的是为高校英语语言文学专业本科生课程中的美国文学史教学服务,遵循史论结合、详略得当的编写原则,既为教师的课堂讲授和学生的自主学习提供丰富的史学知识,又给教师和学生对本门课程的教学内容建构和课堂创新性发言讨论留下足够的发挥空间。

真正意义上独立的美国民族文学始于 19 世纪浪漫主义时期，因此，本书对“第一部分 17 世纪殖民地时期的美国文学”和“第二部分 18 世纪理性与革命时期的美国文学”只做一般性的、综合性的描述与评论，对每个时期几位有较重大影响的作家予以足够详细的评述，对他们在思想文化、文学创作领域所做出的杰出贡献予以充分的肯定。而在“第三部分 19 世纪浪漫主义时期的美国文学”、“第四部分 19 世纪现实主义时期的美国文学”、“第五部分 20 世纪现代主义时期的美国文学”和“第六部分 1945 年以来的后现代主义时期的美国文学”中，则采取文学流派系统介绍、综合评述和重要作家个别介绍、专题评述相结合、史学知识传授和作品主题思想艺术手法研讨相结合的方法，详细描述各时期文学流派总体表现的世界观和历史观，讨论代表作家不同的艺术主张，揭示代表作品的高度思想价值和艺术价值。

《美国文学史》需和《21 世纪新编美国文学选读》配套使用。美国文学教学一般在两个学期内完成。每个学期 18 个教学周。第一和第二部分的史学综述可以学生课外自学、教师课堂略讲要点的办法处理。第三、第四、第五和第六部分各重点研讨 9 位代表作家及其代表作品，每学期可完成 18 位代表作家及其代表作品的研讨，两个学期共重点讨论 36 位代表作家及其代表作品。教师可根据学期实际长度情况选讲其中的 32 或 34 位作家及其作品，其余作家及其作品可留给学生课外自学。

本书的内容和体例是按讲义形式设计的，特别适合师生课前共同备课、合作建构教学内容，课上教师可抛砖引玉引发学生创新思考，自我消解权威，让学生充分展示才华以培养学生的创新能力，对启发式、讨论式课堂教学模式具有极大的实用性。

主 编

2013年6月16日



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AMERICAN LITERATURE IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

(1607—1700)

Historical Introduction

The 15th century was a time for great geographic discoveries. In October 1492, Christopher Columbus (1451—1506) discovered the new continent called America. In fact, before the so-called “America” existed, the large area of land was home to many groups of people of different cultures. The first settlers in America were the Asians known as the ancestors of American Indians or Native Americans, who were following animals across Siberia and infused new life to the uninhabited continent several thousand years before Christopher Columbus. These people were the first “natives” on the American continent. The discovery of America by Columbus led to the rush of European immigrants into this fascinating and strange continent. In the early sixteenth century, the colonists, English and European explorers, arrived in the vast new continental area. Therefore the European powers began the exploration of the new continent and competed against each other in occupying the New World. It was not until early in the seventeenth century that the English began their settlement of the North American continent. These groups have helped establish this place we call “America.” The period of colonization covered the years from 1607 to 1776, that is, from the first settlement of English colonists to the independence of the United States.

Thanks largely to the war with Spain and a great expansion of sea trade in the reign of Elizabeth I (1558—1603), Englishmen attempted to establish permanent colonies in America. The English settlement in America began in 1607, when Captain Christopher Newport anchored his three storm-beaten ships near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. The English settlers laid out

Jamestown as their first permanent settlement in America, and then in rapid succession other English colonies emerged one after another. In order to solve the problem of labor, the settlers turned their attention to slaves. Slavery had existed in North America even before the Europeans arrived. Many Native American tribes enslaved those captured in battle from other tribes. In the middle of the fifteenth century the slave trade began, thousands of Africans were shipped as slaves to America where they were sold into captivity. In 1619, the first African slaves were brought to Jamestown and sold to the plantation owners. By 1775, there were about half a million slaves in the thirteen colonies in North America.

British mercantilism resulted in the eventual shift from an agricultural and tribal society to a slave-holding plantation economy in the South. Such a social transformation demanded a high price to pay for it. A number of laws of the late seventeenth century were intended to compel the settlers to sell to the mother country all their raw materials and agricultural exports. As to the policy, there was no exception to the northern colonies. The natural conditions in the northern area favored commerce and manufactures, but British exploitation in time became intolerable, and provided one of the deep-rooted reasons for the revolution.

The English immigration and settlement in America was not only the result of economic motives but also that of religious ones. The early settlers were so-called Pilgrims and Puritans, who managed to escape to the New World to avoid the religious persecution. The Pilgrims were a small group of believers who migrated from England to Holland in 1608, during a time of persecutions. They were a congregation of "separatists" or non-conformists who had already endured hardship for the sake of conscience before they had ever left the old home. For ten years, this community of Englishmen had lived peacefully in the Dutch city of Leyden, but they felt themselves aliens in a foreign land, and saw that their children were destined to lose their English birthright. After long deliberation, they determined to seek "as Pilgrims" in the new continent a home where they might still possess their cherished freedom of worship, while living under English laws and following the customs and traditions of their motherland. They finally set sail by Mayflower on September 16, 1620. The band of Pilgrims landed at Plymouth in December, 1620. Only about half of the one hundred plus passengers on the Mayflower survived that first winter. After the Pilgrim's arrival, their establishment became the first successful British colony in New England to last over a year and one of the first several colonies of British Colonial America, following Jamestown, Virginia. Although the Plymouth settlement faced great hardships and earned few profits, it enjoyed a positive reputation in England and might have sown the seeds for further immigration.

The companies of settlers who followed the Pilgrims within the next few years were Puritans. The Puritans were members of the Church of England who at first wished to reform or "purify" its doctrines, however, their own firm belief and disconformities with the Church finally led to their withdrawal from it and a great Puritan exodus. Before long, however, the Pilgrims were

surrounded and absorbed by the Puritans of the “Great Migration” of 1628—1640.

From the very beginning, European colonists had been striving for their own geographical expansion and growth of power and interests, therefore, all sorts of collisions between them were inevitable. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Britain launched a series of wars against Spain, Holland and France and became triumphant in control of the continent, the English colonists, who had gradually outnumbered their European counterparts, greatly promoted their American colonies in geography and economic power, and enhanced their impact on the developing continent in terms of politics, commerce, education, art and literature as well.



American Puritanism

The term “Puritan” has been applied to those who criticized or wished to “purify” the rituals, the religious practice of the Church of England. The word is often applied loosely. “Puritan” refers to two distinct groups: “separating” Puritans, such as the Plymouth colonists, who believed that the Church of England was corrupt and that true Christians must separate them from it; and non-separating Puritans, such as the colonists who settled the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who believed in reform but not separation.

To Puritans, religion had the highest priority and man should live, think, and act in a way which tended to the glory of God. So, they were aiming at reforms in its doctrines and greater strictness in religious disciplines, and contending that religion should be a matter of personal faith rather than of ritual, with simpler forms of worship instead of those established by tradition and law within the Church of England. Eventually, these “reformers” were so suppressed that they decided to escape. Puritans left Europe for America in order to prove that they were God’s chosen people enjoying His blessings on this earth as in heaven. They felt that they were exiles under the special grace of God to establish a most desirable relation between church and state in the new continent: a theocracy.

The group of serious and religious people advocated highly religious and moral principles. This is the group we usually think about when we talk about the “first Americans.” They soon established their own religious and moral principles known as American Puritanism which became a dominant factor in American life and one of the most enduring influences in American thought and literature.

The very severity of the frontier conditions taught the American Puritans to be tougher, to be more practical, and to be ever ready for any misfortune and tragic failures that might lie in wait for them. Over the years the Puritans built a way of life that was in harmony with their

religion, one that stressed hard work, thrift, piety and sobriety. Puritanism encouraged people to struggle in their careers. If one's business was booming, it proved that he had gained God's providence. Scholars have long pointed out the link between Puritanism and capitalism: Both rest on ambition, hard work, and an intense striving for success. Although individual Puritans could not know, in strict theological terms, whether they were "saved" and among the elect who would go to heaven, Puritans tended to feel that earthly success was a sign of election. Wealth and status were sought not only for themselves, but as welcome reassurance of spiritual health and promises of eternal life. In addition, the Puritans interpreted all things and events as symbols with deeper spiritual meanings, and felt that in advancing their own profit and their community's well-being, they were also furthering God's plans. All this went, in due time, into the making of American literature. Literature of the New England Settlements is mainly a literary expression of the pious idealism of the American Puritan bequest. The pious and self-disciplined Puritans worked with courage and hope toward building a new Garden of Eden in America. In recording ordinary events to reveal their spiritual meaning, Puritan authors commonly cited the Bible, chapter and verse. History was a symbolic religious panorama leading to the Puritan triumph over the New World and to God's kingdom on Earth. The Puritan values dominated much of the earliest American writing, including the sermons, books, and journals.

The self-made and often self-educated Puritans were notable exceptions. It was the Puritans who wrote most of the literature, and it was Puritanism that was most influential in the intellectual and economic life of the settlers. The first colleges in the colonies, like Harvard University (1638), gave evidences of a great stimulus that the Puritanism afforded to the intellectual life of the settlers. In 1639, the first printing press in America was set up at Cambridge. The colonists also had their grammar schools which prepared for college.

Different from the French and Spanish colonies, the British colonies had opportunities to erect a representative self-government in which both electors and representatives had real political responsibility. This respect paid to essential civil rights began to take root during the colonial period, and bring about increasing changes in the social structure, while breaking down many sorts of special privileges. The direction of the social development seemed to be, to a great extent, the result of the impact of American Puritanism, and the distinctly American character of generations of settlers was a product of their ideal melted with their life experiences on the frontier.



Early New England Literature

It is generally believed that the orally transmitted myths, legends, tales, and lyrics of Indian

cultures existed in North America before the Europeans came. However, American literature was not based on native Indian culture. It was a descendant of European literature. The literature of this period was characterized by the fact that most of the writers were born in Britain. American writing began with the work of English explorers, immigrants, adventurers and colonists in the New World chiefly for the benefit of readers in the mother country. Within a few decades a considerable number of learned people, such as Puritan clergymen and governors, produced a considerable body of writing of high literary quality, yet they were not literary people in the professional sense. The first of American literature was not written by an American, but by John Smith, a British captain, who thus became the first American writer. *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as Hath Happened in Virginia* (1608) was a long report recording what he saw and heard in the New World, which he sent back to England and was printed in 1608 without his knowledge. So, the early American literature also called early New England Literature or "Colonial Literature." The early New England literature grew out of humble origins. Diaries, letters, histories, journals, sermons, poetry, biographies, autobiographies and prose, in short, personal literature in its various forms, occupy a major position in the literature of the early colonial period. The writing style of this period is fresh, simple and direct; the rhetoric is plain and honest, with a touch of nobility often traceable to the direct influence of the Bible.

Early colonial American writing revealed the beginning of a struggle for definition and meaning. A national character was molded by a certain inheritance, environment, and historical experience. From Europe, the early settlers brought with them certain customs, habits and traditions. In adapting themselves to the rough American environment, they were forced to change. While exploring the wilderness, the European ways of living were slowly modified by American frontier experience, with its large tract of free land and dangers from Indians and nature. All these experiences in varying degrees characterized the American national characters—individualism, self-reliance, independence and an optimistic faith—and gave birth to the Puritan values: hard-work, thrift, piety, and sobriety.

Puritanism exerted a great influence on American literature, and its impact could find expression in almost all respects concerning literature. Puritan doctrines and literary practice contributed to no small extent to the development of an indigenous symbolism. In addition to being true believers of their religious doctrines, the early Puritans generally had college education with a sound knowledge of the literary classics, and learned much about the basic qualities of literature from the ancient and contemporary authors in the old continent. Such religious and cultural background of the Puritan writers was responsible for the two essential characteristics of the early American literature: their religious subject and imitation of English literary traditions. To the pious Puritans the physical, phenomenal world was nothing but a symbol of God. The Puritans believed that they should spend all their free time studying the Bible. They thought

that because they should be studying the Bible, other forms of enjoyment were unacceptable. The conviction that all religious progress was centered in the individual led colonial writers to make records of their spiritual development in writings. Hence all the analyses may lead to the conclusion that it is reasonable to consider early New England literature primarily in terms of Puritanism and Puritan writing, and that without some understanding of the Puritan contribution it would be difficult to understand colonial American literature, let alone the subsequent development of American literature. In early Puritan writers, English literary traditions were faithfully imitated and transplanted. The American poets of the 17th century adapted the style of the established European poets. In addition, in the categories of the literary works, there were “travel,” “diary,” and “poem,” etc., among which the poetry and prose gained most achievements in this period. The most noteworthy writers were the first American writer John Smith, the first American woman poet Anne Bradstreet, John Cotton, Roger Williams and Edward Taylor.



John Smith

Captain John Smith (1580—1631) is recognized as the first American writer. He was also one of the first early 17th century British settlers in North America and one of the leaders of the Jamestown colony, Virginia.

Captain John Smith was born in Lincolnshire, England, to a freeman farmer family. He was a true soldier of fortune, venturesome, resolute, self-reliant, and resourceful. John Smith received his first states of adventure at 17 when he fought in the Netherlands against Spain. Soon came more adventures. He had been a soldier in the French army and had served in that of Holland. He had wandered through Italy and Greece into the countries of Eastern Europe, and had lived for a year in Turkey and Tartary. He had been in Russia, Germany, Spain, and Africa, and was familiar with the islands of the Mediterranean and those of the eastern Atlantic. By the time he returned to England in 1605, he became Captain John Smith, and was still eager for travel. He then looked to North America for adventure. Of the 143 men who had sailed from England by Mayflower late in 1606, 105 survived the voyage. John Smith was one of them, and was appointed as a member of the Council at the head of affairs in the Jamestown colony for his experience and practical sagacity. In 1614, Smith traveled to the place he named “New England,” what is now Maine and Massachusetts. After spending the winter, he returned to England, hoping to encourage others to settle in New England. He died in London in 1631.

His writings about North America became the source of information about the New World for latter settlers. The first of his books—*A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of*

Note as Hath Happened in Virginia (1608), was also the first American literature, which was a long report recording what he saw and heard in the New World and was printed in 1608 without his knowledge. John Smith's description of America was filled with themes, myths, images, scenes, characters, and events that served as a foundation for the nation's literature. It supplied the earliest chronicle of the perils and hardships of the American Pioneers. However, his writing was more like an advertisement than a warning. The thrilling incidents of that distressing struggle with the wilderness which makes a genuine appeal to the reader now, as it undoubtedly did to the kinsmen of the colonists in England for whom the book was originally prepared. His books were read carefully by all who contemplated sailing for the colonies. They found in them vivid glimpses of an unknown land and of forest warfare with the redskins. It was natural enough that such a daring rover should catch the spirit of enthusiasm with which the exploration and settlement of the New World had inflamed Englishmen of his time and type and urge emigration to the new land.

Another thing he wrote about that became historically important is his description of the fertile and vast new continent in his *A Description of New England* (1616). His narrative reveals the early settlers' vision of the new land as something capable of being built into a new Garden of Eden. Later, after his explorations along the coast of New England, he published several other books, including *The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624). The book has become an American legend which wrote about his capture by the Indians and his rescue by the famous Indian Princess, Pocahontas.

His writing is the chief source of what we know about the Virginia Indians before they were conquered and all but destroyed by the white men. His writings helped set the form of the exploration and travel narratives that inspired men to move westward to America and across the continent. As an explorer and leader, he has been known as a national hero.



John Cotton

John Cotton (1584—1652) was a highly regarded principal among the New England Puritan ministers, among whom were included John Winthrop, Thomas Hooker, Increase Mather (who became his son-in-law), John Davenport, and Thomas Shepard. He was the grandfather of Cotton Mather, who was named after him.

Born in England, he was educated at Derby School, in buildings which are now the Derby Heritage Center, and attended Cambridge University, where he also taught, and became a long-serving minister in the English town of Boston, Lincolnshire for nearly twenty years and was

known far and wide for his aggressive spirituality. In 1633, he discovered that he was no longer safe in his native land, because his Puritanism and criticism of hierarchy drew the hostile attention of the Church of England authorities. The principal colony on Massachusetts Bay had longed for him. In the same year, Cotton, his family, and a few local followers sailed for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In compliment to him, its members adopted the name of Boston; and John Cotton became the foremost minister in New England—"a most universal scholar, a living system of the liberal arts, and a walking library," as his grandson, Cotton Mather, described him.

John Cotton wrote many theological treatises, and engaged in bitter controversies. His writings lack the picturesque imagery of Hooker and Shepard. His style is lifeless now, but he carried prodigious weight among his contemporaries and was the foremost champion in the theological battles of his age. Cotton's written legacy includes a body of correspondence, numerous sermons, a catechism, and in 1646 a shorter catechism for children titled *Milk for Babes*, which is considered as the first children's book by an American. It was incorporated into *The New England Primer* around 1701 and remained a component of that work for over 150 years. His most famous sermon is probably "Gods Promise to His Plantation" (1630), preached at the departure of John Winthrop's fleet for New England.

Because of his early views on the primacy of congregational government, he played an important role in Puritan aspirations to become the "city on a hill" which might help reform the English church. He is best known for other things like his ritual defense of Anne Hutchinson early in her trials during the Antinomian crisis, during which she mentioned him with respect, though he turned strongly against her during the further course of the trial. He is also remembered for his role in the banishment of Roger Williams. Cotton grew more conservative in his views with the years but always retained the estimation of his community.



Roger Williams

Roger Williams (1603—1683) was one of the greatest Puritan dissenters in the early days of Puritan theocracy in New England. In the early days of colonization, there was a powerful champion of American ideals of liberty of conscience and toleration of racial and religious differences. Roger Williams constitutes one of its most influential representatives.

Born in Wales, a university man and a clergyman in the Church of England, he had turned nonconformist, and appeared in Plymouth colony in the usual way. Upon his graduation at Pembroke College, Cambridge, Williams set sail for Massachusetts in 1630. After his arrival in 1631, he began to preach for civil and religious liberty and against the Puritan oligarchy of

Boston. In 1633, Williams went to Salem to be the minister there two years after his arrival at Plymouth. However, he soon found himself as a minister in conflict with the Anglican Church and the new churches in America, and his teachings were altogether too radical to suit his stern and narrow-minded Puritan brethren. He taught that it was unrighteous to rob the land belonged to the American Indians, and maintained that the State's authority should not extend over the individual conscience or opinion. His radical ideas were subversive of the prevailing power and theocracy. His opposition to the eviction of the Indians from their ancestral properties and call for democratic government incurred the wrath and hatred of such "orthodox" Puritans. Hence, he was banished from Massachusetts in 1635, yet he fled into the wilderness to avoid deportation to England. He lived for a while with the Indians before immigrating to Rhode Island, where he established the "Rhode Island Way" to encourage religious toleration, and protect Indian rights. Williams revisited England several times, and he knew Milton and had the friendship of Cromwell. It was on one of these visits that he wrote *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* in refutation of the arguments by John Cotton and published it in London in 1644. The work furiously attacked the "soul-killing" requirement of religious conformity, vigorously upholding the spiritual freedom of the individual and was the beginning of a famous literary battle between himself and that belligerent Puritan defender, John Cotton. In the eyes of the orthodox Puritans, he was such a rebel against the divine church order that his work was ordered to be burned. The final rejoinder came from Roger Williams in *The Bloody Tenet Yet More Bloody* (1654), by Mr. Cotton's endeavor to wash it white in the Blood of the Lamb.

Among his major works in defense of religious freedom and social justice, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644), and *The Bloody Tenet Yet More Bloody* (1654) attacked upon the theology of Massachusetts Bay; *Queries of Highest Consideration* (1644) appealed for separation of church and state. Due to his active role on behalf of Rhode Island as a new colony, in 1654 he was elected president of the colony, serving three terms. Roger Williams was one of those who proclaim the notion that sound government can only function with the approval of the people so far in advance of John Locke (1632—1704) call for "civil right" over forty years. Roger Williams will go down in American history as a staunch fighter for freedom and democracy.



Anne Bradstreet

Anne Bradstreet (1612—1672) was one of the first poets to write English verse in the American colonies and has been praised as a significant poet of colonial period.