Eleven Nineteenth Century American Authors

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OCTOBER 1959
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HENRY ADAMS (1838-1918)

Primary Sources: Books

Secondary Sources: Books


"... The value of Adams for us: the double value of his scrupulous attitude toward his unifying notions and of the human aspirations he was able to express under them."


Provides an interesting insight into Adams' Harvard days, as well as his personality generally.


Good chapters on the History and Chartres.


Contains a bibliography.


Contains a bibliography.

A stimulating essay on Adams.
Secondary Sources: Articles

Critics of Henry Adams have been taken in by his pose of failure and "have ignored those passages in the Education which actually contradict and cancel the notion of failure."


Deals principally with the Education,

A "re-examination of his approach to his world" reveals a "cluster of attitudes and preoccupations which clearly anticipate much of what is significant in the work of ... social scientists" today.  His presentation of this approach "was so consistent, elaborate, and thoroughgoing -- and yet so free from the burden of technical jargon -- that intuitions and goals unclear or concealed in modern social science may be illuminated by a retracing of his search for genuine knowledge of society, by a retracing of his tenacious effort to cut through an infinite succession of wholly baffling events."


White, Lynn, Jr. Dynamo and Virgin reconsidered, American Scholar 27:183-194, Spring ’58. By an examination of the technology of the middle ages, Mr. White shows that the dichotomy symbolized by the dynamo and the Virgin is not a valid one. "The Virgin and the dynamo are not opposing principles permeating the universe: they are allies." He concludes that the nature of reality does not lend itself to "neat opposing categories."
SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS (MARK TWAIN) (1835-1910)

Primary Sources: Books


___________. *The autobiography of Mark Twain.* Charles Neider, ed. New York, Harper, 1959. A chronological arrangement of much that has been published before. The editor claims to have included thirty to forty thousand words of previously unpublished material. This edition still is not complete, however. Both Twain's surviving daughter, Clara, and the editor have withheld material for various reasons. Mr. Neider challenges the judgment of Paine and DeVoto in this edition.


___________. *Mark Twain of the Enterprise.* Henry Nash Smith, ed. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1957. (PS 1302 s64) Twain's writing done for the Virginia City Enterprise in 1862-64.


Traveling with the innocents abroad; Mark Twain's original reports from Europe and the Holy Land. Daniel M. McKeithan, ed. 1st ed. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1958.

All of the fifty-eight letters Twain wrote for the San Francisco Daily Alta California or other papers, with useful editorial comment.
Secondary Sources: Books

Contains an excellent bibliography.

See pp. 119-140 and 249-265 for Twain's techniques for achieving humor. Good summary of Twain's style on pp. 264-265. Also important for Twain's religious and ethical ideas.

Mark Twain as an American humorist in whose work most of the important trends of native American humor culminate. Bibliography of the first editions of Twain's important works of humor, p. 195.

Brashear, Minnie M. Mark Twain, son of Missouri. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1934. (PS 1331 B82)
An examination of Twain's boyhood environment which tends to refute the Brooks's thesis. Also an exhaustive investigation of his reading which seems to indicate Twain's debt to 18th century radical thinkers and humorists.

First published in 1920, this work revived interest in Twain. Brooks's thesis, since
generally refuted, was a view of Twain as a natural artist and rebellious pioneer frustrated by his middle class environment, by the puritanical and materialistic respectability represented in his youth by his mother, Jane, and in manhood by his wife, Olivia, and his friend, Howells.

A study of the evolution of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

*Mark Twain's America*. Boston, Little, Brown, 1932. (PS 1331 D51)
Among other things, this work refutes Brooks' thesis. Also, one of the best summaries of the important facts of frontier humor and Mississippi Valley folklore, both of which were significant influences upon main's writing. (Particularly Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn)


One of the best biographies. In his discussion of Innocents abroad, Ferguson says that Twain's mature style is in evidence at this point. Twain was "writing as he was always thenceforward to write: sometimes producing eloquent and genuinely humorous prose, sometimes producing buffoonery and never completely certain which was which."

A vivid personal impression of Wain by a friend of long standing. Of value despite the fact that it may be over-appreciative.


A valuable summary of Twain scholarship.


Detailed but not always dependable.


Mark Twain as a humorist in the American tradition.


__________. Mark Twain, the man and his work. New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1935.

A sound biography with valuable comments on Twain's writing.

10
Brief but excellent estimate of Twain.

_____________________. *Sam Clemens of Hannibal.* Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1952, (PS 1332 W38)
Best study of Twain's boyhood years.
Secondary Sources: Articles

"... without advance planning, and spurred by momentary impulses, Mark Twain -- in all probability unconsciously -- constructed whole passages of Huckleberry Finn on an aesthetic principle of repetition and variation."

"... despite some common beliefs Whitman's and Clemens' differing viewpoints apparently caused them to fail to appreciate one another's work."


A discussion of Twain's theories concerning "the use of observation and experience by the writer, adherence to the law of probability, the use of concrete details, and the need for realistic characterization.

Twain's "primary objective in the 'fatal' last chapters is to ridicule ... the
romantic tradition as exemplified by Tom Sawyer ...; and to win final sympathy for the realistic tradition and its hero, Huck, who has achieved a sense of responsibility and a meaningful vision of life."

Jones, Alexander E. Mark Twain and the determinism of What is man?. American Literature 29: 1-17, March '57.
Twain's determinism was not the product of the personal catastrophes in the latter part of his life. It represented, rather, a position "which Twain had entertained during his years of greatest prosperity."

Lane, Lauriat, Jr. Why Huckleberry Finn is a great world novel. College English 17:1-5, October '55.
"It has in common with other world novels the themes of appearance versus reality, passage from youth to maturity, man's obsession with the symbols of material wealth. It conveys the total vision of a nation or people, is epic in scope and quality, allegorical in meaning."

"Although Twain had lost some skill, this is a searing revelation that his bitterness against man and institutions was deepening rapidly."

"Pudd'nhead Wilson is a subtle and masterly treatment of the moral patterns of both human nature and civilization."

Marx, Leo. Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling and Huckleberry Finn. The American Scholar 22:423-440, Autumn '53.

Another look at the problem of the ending of this novel.

The pilot and the passenger: landscape conventions and the style of Huckleberry Finn. American Literature 28:129-146, May '56.


"Its eminence is owing 'to our mythologizing of the West.' The work has flaws arising from Twain's disregard for artistic form and his 'imperfect sense of tone.' It is marred by melodrama and claptrap and some of the action." The dialogue and the observations are not appropriate to Huck.

Remes, Carol. The heart of Huckleberry Finn. Masses and Mainstream 13:8-16, November '55.

The central issue is Huck's learning to reject human slavery. although recent critics have tended to obscure this fact,


EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

Primary Sources: Books


"The best of (the letters) ... bring her remarkable mind, her poetic self to vivid life for readers nearly a century later."


The definitive edition of the poems. This edition includes variant readings which are compared with all known manuscripts.
Secondary Sources: Books


An important study of her life and ideas with analysis of that poetry which seems to give biographical insights.
Secondary Sources: Articles

"Multiplicity, freedom, spontaneity: These are terms for much deeper aspects of the Dickinson notation than that which gathers itself in mere punctuation, syntax, and grammar; or in meter, rhythm, and diction."

Connors, D. C. The significance of Emily Dickinson. College English 3:624-633, April '42.
An appreciation of her poetic achievement in terms of "the familiar landmarks of her poetry -- Life, Nature, Love, Time, and Eternity."

Emily Dickinson, the domestication of terror. (London) Times Literary Supplement, p. 532, 9 September '55.
Summary of her career and of the disputes over her manuscripts since her death.


A study which compares "The Dickinson vocabulary with other poets ... to determine in what ways she is unique in the words she uses and in what ways she conforms to patterns established by other poets." Mr. Howard finds that "it is not in the words that she uses but in 'the way in which she uses them that Emily Dickinson is most original."
Ransom, John Crowe. Emily Dickinson. *Perspectives* USA 15:5-20, Spring '56.
A study of her method.

A useful introductory essay which deals in a general way with Dickinson's poetic achievement and technique.
RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

Primary Sources: Books


*The heart of Emerson's journals.* Bliss Perry, ed. Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1926. (PS 1631 A3)


A group of selections intended to "re-establish communication with one of the seminal minds of our literature ... to see past the familiar public image to the man." The introduction outlines some of the difficulties which the modern reader faces in such a project.
Secondary Sources: Books


Emerson's life and thought.

__________ *The life of Emerson.* New York, Dutton, 1932. (PS 1631 B87)

Draws heavily upon the *Journals.*


Emerson by one who knew him well.


"Emerson is the major prophet of the (American) Dream (of a richer life for all):
'Revolting against past tradition, reflecting present experience, appealing of necessity to the future, Emerson's thought became typically the American philosophy . . . . Many others affirmed the dignity and beauty of the concept, but few were as successful as he in resisting the doubts and the disillusionment.'"

__________ *Emerson and Asia.* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1930. (PS 1642 A7 C29)

Emerson's Orientalism and Neo-Platonism.

__________ *Emerson handbook.* New York, Hendricks House, 1953. (PS 1631 C29)

Topical summary and guide to much of the literature on Emerson.


"In ... strictly historical regard ... There is no organic evolution of ideas from Edwards to Emerson .... What is persistent, from the covenant theology ... to Edwards and to Emerson is the Puritan's effort to face the image of a blinding divinity in the physical universe, and to look upon that universe without the intermediacy of ritual, of ceremony, of the Mass and the confessional." The difference between them is that Emerson has turned from the Calvinistic concept of original sin held by Edwards.

The impact of Emerson's theory of "correspondence" on his thought, "... a faith which in turn became a way of seeing the universe in the light of human needs." (Paul)


Rusk, Ralph L. The life of Ralph Waldo Emerson. New York, Scribner's, 1949. (PS 1631 R95)

The standard biography. Includes a bibliography.


Excellent for Emerson's philosophy.


The inner drama of opposing ideas in Emerson's mind. Contains a bibliography.


Still one of the most discriminating biographies with criticism.
Secondary Sources: Articles


Hopkins, Vivian C. Emerson and Bacon. American Literature 29:408-430, January '58. The influence of Francis Bacon upon Emerson's thought.

An examination of a "central and constitutional doubt on Emerson's part which from the very beginning worked against any universality for his theories of the soul -- his doubt of the capacity in the majority of men for the kind of perception necessary to the transcendental life."


NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-1864)

Primary Sources: Books


__________ . The complete novels and selected tales. Introd, by Norman Holmes Pearson. New York, Modern Library, 1937. (PZ 3 H399c)


__________ . Passages from the American notebooks. Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1900. (PS 1855 F00)

Secondary Sources: Books


Cantwell, Robert. Nathaniel Hawthorne, the American years, New York, Rinehart, 1948. (PS 1881 C23)


The form of The Scarlet Letter is more like the drama than the novel, according to Cowley, also, in this work, Hawthorne "applied to a longer work the exacting standards that he and Edgar Poe, working separately, had developed in writing their tales or short stories.


"For any students still laboring under the impression that Hawthorne was a transden
talist, a skeptic, or, 'at heart,' a Roman Catholic, this book could serve as a useful corrective."


Thesis: (1) Our best minds have dwelt on the problem of evil; (2) Symbolism is characteristic of our best fiction, a valuable work. (Includes bibliography)

Matthiessen, F. O. *American renaissance; art and expression in the age of Emerson and Whitman*. London, New York, etc., Oxford University Press, 1941. (PS 201 M44)


Last chapter contains summary of his ideas.


Hawthorne's ideas and comments on the novels. (Includes bibliography)

A new attempt to explain Hawthorne as an artist, relying heavily upon detailed evaluation of his work.


Secondary Sources: Articles


The "main tragic problem" is Dimmesdale's. As a character, he illustrates Calvinistic notions of sin and regeneration.


"The fall of the house of Usher' provides clues" for an analysis of The house of seven gables.


The structure of this novel "is a single idea, the transformation from innocence to experience, repeated, with no major deviations, four times.'


Fairbanks, Henry G. Sin, free will, and 'pessimism' in Hawthorne. PMLA 71:975-989, December '56.

Foster, C. H. Hawthorne's literary theory. PMLA 57:241-254, March '42.


Miller, James E., Jr. Hawthorne and Melville: the unpardonable sin. PMLA 70:91-114, March '55. Sin of the head over the heart in Hawthorne's stories and Moby Dick.


Reeves, G., Jr. Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand." Explicator 14: Item 56, June '56.

Ringe, D. L. Hawthorne's psychology of the head and the heart. PMLA 65:120-132, March '50.


WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (1837-1920)

Primary Sources: Books

Howells, William Dean. Criticism and fiction, New York, Harper, 1891. (PN 81 H85)


The introduction "is probably the best critical appraisal of Howells now in print, and their bibliography and other editorial aids leave little to be desired." (Spiller) Included are excerpts from Howells' novels and autobiographical works, as well as the more important of his critical essays written for Harper's.
Secondary Sources: Books


Cody, Edwin. The road to realism; the early years, 1837-1885, of William Dean Howells. Syracuse, N. Y., Syracuse University Press, 1956. The only recent biography of Howells. It is the first of two volumes and includes critical material on the major novels.


A brief examination of the literary background of Howells' realism and an even briefer summary of realism as illustrated by his novels.
Secondary Sources: Articles


"Howells stands for the aroused conscience and intelligence of late-nineteenth century America, slowly reacting to the realization that the dream and the reality were not the same and seeking painfully and hesitantly to find the reason and so to put the country back on the right path."


Clemens, Samuel L. William Dean Howells. Harper's 113:221-225, July '06.
In terms of writing ability, Howells is the exception to the rule "that the sun of a man's mentality touches noon at forty and then begins to wane towards setting."

Howells' reticence about sex in his novels.


35

HENRY JAMES (1843-1916)

Primary Sources: Books


Prefaces to the various volumes of the "New York Edition" of James's works.


A small boy and others, Notes of a son and brother, and The middle years are reprinted here.


___________. Literary reviews and essays, on American, English, and French literature. Albert Mordell, ed. New York, Twayne Publishers, 1957. (PS 2120 L5)
More than sixty items, previously uncollected first twenty years of James's literary career.


Half of the 120 letters in this edition are printed for the first time.


Secondary Sources: Books


B. Sec index for comments on particular novels.


Bowden, Edwin T. The themes of Henry James; a system of observation through the visual arts. New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1956 (PS 2124 B78)


Bibliography, pp. 288-303.


An important study containing some valuable comments about the craft and James. It was first published in 1921.


Secondary Sources: Articles


"The largest single category of similes and metaphors from his fiction is that of art."

James's revisions were generally towards "greater clarity and concreteness, and at times greater economy and a flavor of in- formality in his style ... ."


Bibliography of the controversy over the various Freudian readings of this story.

Slabey, Robert M. Henry James and "The most impressive convention in all history." American Literature 30:89-102, March '58.
The Catholic Church appealed to James's aesthetic sense.

The "golden nail" metaphor harmonizes structure and theme in The ambassadors.

Wegelin, Christof. Henry James: the expatriate as American. Symposium 9:46-55, Spring '55. "James's expatriate attitudes and actions were rooted finally in American ideas?"

Wellek, Rene. Henry James's literary theory and criticism. American Literature 30:293-321, November '58. "James to my mind is by far the best American critic of the nineteenth century ... is brimful of ideas and critical concepts and has a well-defined theory and a point of view which allows him to characterize sensitively and evaluate persuasively a wide range of writers largely, of course, the French, English, and American novelists of his own time."
HERMAN MELVILLE (1819-1891)

Primary Sources: Books

Melville, Herman. *Herman Melville; representative selections, with introduction, bibliography, and notes*. New York, American Book Company, 1938. (PS 2382 T51)


Includes some interesting plates of New Bedford and whaling vessels.


The definitive edition of *Moby Dick*.


"Standard ed." The only complete edition of Melville's works, although another edition is in progress.
Secondary Sources: Books


A readable biography, marred at times by in-substantial and sometimes laughable psychological hypotheses about Melville's inner life. Contains an extended analysis of *Moby Dick.*


After *Moby Dick,* "Melville suffered the exorbitant penalty of his great failure (as a novelist), not as a result of the injuries inflicted upon him by his age, but because of his radical inability to master a technique -- that of the novel -- radically foreign to his sensibility."


*Moby Dick* and *Billy Budd* in light of traditional themes in the American novel.


Another look at *Moby Dick*.


Matthiessen, F. O. *American renaissance*. pp. 1941371-

(PS 201 M44)


Comprehensive treatment of the element of humor in *Moby Dick*.


Emphasizes Melville's thought more than his literary achievement.


Melville's ideas and *comments* upon his novels.
Secondary Sources: Articles


"Billy Budd may justifiably and profitably be considered as an inside narrative about a tragic conflict in Melville's own spiritual life."


Stresses the "poetic power" of Moby Dick.


Hawthorne and Melville: the unpardonable sin. PMLA 70:91-114, March '55.

Hawthorne's sin of the head over the heart, or intellectual pride, as seen in Moby Dick.

Billy Budd represents Rousseau's concept of man as naturally good; Claggart is "a restrained version of Hobbes's primitive man," one who is by nature at war with all other men.

Osbourn, R. V. The white whale and the absolute. Essay in Criticism 6:160-170, April '56. "Moby-Dick may be interpreted in philosophical instead of psychological or theological terms, which have many meanings connected with Melville's very active metaphysical speculative interests at the time he wrote it."


Stewart, George R. The two Moby Dicks. American Literature 25:417-448, January '54. The novel may have been almost completed as a whaling story of adventure before Ahab became the central character.


EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

Primary Sources: Books

"Largest collection of Poe's writings now in print."


Virginia ed., which is usually considered the authoritative text for Poe's work, Volumes I and XVII are biographical.


Latest collection of the letters. Very important for an understanding of Poe,
"Convenient one-volume edition of the best of the poetry and prose,"

Secondary Sources: Books

**Campbell, Killis.** *The mind of Poe, and other studies.* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1933.

A unique and important study of Poe.


Thesis: (1) Our best minds have dwelt on the problem of evil; (2) Symbolism is characteristic of our best fiction. A valuable work.


This chapter provides a good assessment of Poe and his achievement.

**Miller, Perry.** *The raven and the whale; the war of words and wits in the era of Poe and Melville.* New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1953.

19th century American literature: history and criticism.

**Quinn, A. H.** Edgar Allan Poe; a critical biography. New York, Appleton-Century, 1941.

The standard scholarly biography.

**Spiller, R. E.** *The cycle of American literature; an essay in historical criticism.* pp. 63-78. New York, Macmillan, 1955. (PS 88 S75c)

**Stovall, Floyd, ed.** *Eight American authors, a review of research and criticism.* pp. 1-46. New York, Modern Language Association of America, 1956. (PS 201 S88)

Secondary Sources: Articles


Basler, Roy P. The interpretation of "Ligeia." College English 5:363-372, '44.

___________. Poe's "Ulalume." Explicator 2: Item 49, '44.


Coad, Oral S. The meaning of Poe's "Eldorado." Modern Language Notes 59:59-61, January '44.

___________. Poe's "Israfel." Explicator 2: Item 57, '44.

Dowdey, Clifford. Poe's last visit to Richmond. American Heritage 7:22-25, 96-97, April '56.


Mabbott, T. O. Poe's "The fall of the house of Usher." Explicator 15: Item 7, November '56.

The story may be a clinical study of the neurotic children of Luke and Harriet Usher.

Moss, Sidney S. Poe and his nemesis -- Lewis Gaylord Clark. American Literature 28:30-46, March '56.

Clark's consistent hostility toward Poe lets us study 'almost clinically' the numerous but not obscure reasons why Poe was attacked by contemporary critics during his lifetime. An important insight into Poe as a critic.


Poe's poem, rather than being the simple and optimistic expression of a searcher for the ideal, is marked by ambiguity and pessimism.


Poe's semi-philosophical works, including Eureka.


HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817-1862)

Primary Sources: Books

Thoreau, Henry David. **Collected poems by Henry Thoreau.** Carl Bode, ed. Chicago, Packard, 1943. (PS 3041 B6)

Most complete collection of poetry.

Thoreau. **Consciousness in Concord, Notes and a commentary by Perry Miller.** Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1958. (PS 3053 A2 F58)

First printing of the long-missing third volume of Thoreau's 39 manuscript notebooks. Through Miller's comments, a new view of Thoreau emerges.


A good selection of the Journals.

Thoreau. **Henry David Thoreau; representative selections, with introduction, bibliography, and notes.** Bartholow V. Crawford, ed. New York, American Book Company, 1934.


(WPS 3042 B66)

Thoreau. **Walden.** Introd. by Basil Willey.

New York, Norton, 1951. (PS 3048 F51)

(PS 3042 A7)


The Walden ed. Includes a volume of the *Journal*. The *standard edition* of Thoreau's works.
Secondary Sources: Books


Matthiessen, F. O. *American renaissance*. pp. 3-175. London, Oxford University Press, 1941. (PS 201 M44)

Best: study of Thoreau, the writer.


This work revised in 1896 is one of the best biographies -- one which furthered Thoreau's reputation in England.


Thoreau through the eyes of a friend.


Brings into focus Thoreau's continual evolution of thought.


Whicher, George F. *Walden revisited*. Chicago, Packard, 1945, (PS 3053 W57)

Brief but valuable introductory study.
Secondary Sources: Articles


"Thoreau's essay offered confirmation of the effectiveness of deliberate resistance to unjust laws, even though Gandhi remarked that Indian resistance to authority was well advanced before he read the essay."

Hovde, Carl F. Nature into art: Thoreau's use of his journals in A week. American Literature 30:165-184, May '58.
Thoreau as artist in action.


Emerson and Thoreau revealed in their journals.


"While most present-day college students admire Thoreau's courage, they think his nonconformity outmoded."
WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

Primary Sources: Books


___________. Leaves of grass. Philadelphia, McKay, 1892,
The last edition which Whitman supervised, variously known as "The 1891-1892," the "deathbed," the "ninth," and the "tenth" edition,

A study of the poetry for its poetic values rather than for its biographical clues,

Secondary Sources: Books

"Incorporates the tested results of all factual scholarship in a well-balanced biography."

---
e. Walt Whitman abroad. Syracuse, N. Y., Syracuse University Press, 1955. (PS 3238 h42)
Foreign criticism in translation.

---
Walt Whitman handbook, Chicago, Packard, 1946. (PS 3231 h42)
Useful for analysis of scholarship and bibliography.

Biographical study to which Whitman contributed material and editorial supervision.

Biographical study to which Whitman contributed material and editorial supervision.

A biography which includes comments on Whitman's American sources and democratic ideas.

"Walt Whitman's universal idealism was too much conditioned by the genteel tradition from which it recoiled."

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Miller, James E., Jr. *A critical guide to Leaves of grass.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957. (PS 3238 M64)

A series of essays on the major poems which concentrates on certain aspects of Whitman's achievement, and as a result, does not present a well rounded view of his esthetic achievement.


Secondary Sources: Articles


Coffman, Stanley K., Jr. Form and meaning in Whitman's "Passage to India." *PMLA* 70:337-349, June '55. Whitman's imagery is a "principal means of contributing form, and through it, meaning to the poem."


Miller, James E., Jr "Song of Myself" as inverted mystical experience. *PMLA* 70:636-661, September '55. Traces through the poem a new structure and a new pattern of division based on various stages of the mystical experience.

A summary of contemporary knowledge of the man and his work,


"Whitman's faith is the democratic faith: That man is born to be free, that the only true freedom is freedom under the law, and that he will attain it only through moral perfection."
