REGIONALISM AND LOCAL COLOR FICTION

The terms “regionalism” and “local color fiction” refer to a literary movement that flourished from the close of the Civil War to the end of the nineteenth century. Although most fiction is regional in that it makes use of a specific setting, for regionalist writers the setting was not incidental but central, and the “local color” details that established that setting gave a name to the movement. In writing regional fiction, authors focused on representing the unique locales of what they saw as a vanishing American past whose customs, dialect, and characters they sought to preserve. Furthermore, as writers of a continuing national narrative implicitly focused on what it meant to be American, they often presented characters as types, sometimes as representatives of the collective traits of a community or region and sometimes as outsiders or eccentrics whose attempts to fit into a community exposed both the community’s values and their own. In addition to this emphasis on setting and its effect upon character, local color stories feature dialect that lends authenticity to the tale. Another element common to local color fiction is a degree of narrative distance rendered through the character of a narrator differing in class or place of origin from the region’s residents; a variation on this is a narrative voice distanced through educated diction or an ironic tone.

In the late nineteenth century, local color fiction appeared in the great literary journals of the day such as Harper’s New Monthly Magazine, the Century, and the Atlantic Monthly as well as in newspapers and popular magazines, as Nancy Glazener, Richard Brodhead, and Charles Johanningsmeier have shown. It differed from mainstream realism in its choice of local or rural instead of urban subjects and interest in the customs of populations otherwise invisible in the literary landscape, such as the poor, ethnic minorities, and the elderly; moreover, unlike mainstream realism, the market for local color encouraged writers who might otherwise find difficulty publishing their work because of gender, geography, class, or ethnicity. Describing a locale, a time, and a set of characters removed from the concerns of city dwellers who read high-culture journals, local color stories provided an imagined space containing the roots of the nation, a site of unchanging values and authentic traditions against which to view the uncertainties of industrial urban life. Such a perspective later led to claims that regionalism was too limited in its subjects and too nostalgic or sentimental in its approach, charges that contributed to its disappearance early in the twentieth century. Twentieth-century critics saw local color fiction as a marginal offshoot of mainstream realism, with women’s regional fiction a “literature of impoverishment,” in Ann Douglas Wood’s words, that lacked the aesthetic sophistication of modernist works, the vigor of writing by male social realists, and even the rich detail of domestic fiction written in the 1850s and 1860s.

Some commentators have challenged both the denunciation of local color fiction and the conditions of its literary revival. Like realism, local color fiction now seems a significant staging-ground for late-nineteenth-century debates over citizenship and nationhood, although the criteria for establishing that significance have shifted. For example, beginning in the 1970s feminist critics such as Josephine Donovan, Marjorie Pryse, and Judith Fetterley found in the form a vibrant celebration of community that resisted the Gilded Age’s preoccupation with national wealth and industrial power, whereas twenty years later Sandra Zagarell, Susan Gillman, and Elizabeth Ammons denounced its promotion of racist, nationalist, and imperialist ideologies and, by virtue of its celebration of community, its strategies for resisting social change and reinforcing an oppressive status quo. Opinions also differ as to the whether the focus on region that


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Bruce Levy
provided access to publishing markets for populations for women and ethnic minorities was an unmixed blessing, for as James Cox notes, the local colorists’ “region was a refuge for imaginative expression, yet it was also the enclosure that kept them in their place” (p. 767). As Tom Lutz sums up the controversies in Cosmopolitan Vistas:

There are many other debates in the history of criticism . . . having to do with local color’s “minor status” (pro and con), the genre’s relation to gender (it’s women’s province; no, it isn’t), to ethnic literature (ethnic lit is also local color; no, it’s something else), to political progressivism (local color is fer it; no, it’s agin it), to realism (it is a degraded popular offshoot, it is where true realism begins and develops), and to regional identity. (P. 26)

Most central, however, as Lutz suggests, is the issue of whether local color exploits the region as a site for cultural tourism, as Richard Brodhead and Amy Kaplan contend, or whether this exploitation occurs only in certain kinds of fiction. In Writing Out of Place, for example, Fetterley and Pryse differentiate “local color” from “regionalist” fiction: “local color” writing exploits regional materials for the benefit of an urban elite, but “regionalist” fiction, with its sympathetic approach, does not. With the exception of Charles W. Chesnutt (1858–1932), Fetterley and Pryse see regionalism as a woman’s genre. Any account of local color’s origins, rise, and fall can therefore present only a partial view of the ways in which local color fiction was received and interpreted by its nineteenth-century audiences. At issue is the very nature of the “cultural work” that local color performed: Did it rebuild and unite a nation fractured by the Civil War? Or did it create a false narrative of national origins that conspired to suppress the clamoring of immigrants, people of color, and the poor for political and cultural power?

ORIGINS

Even before the Civil War, types of local color fiction such as regional humor and frontier tales had found favor with the public. Among the most prominent examples of regional humor were the stories of the southwestern humorists, vivid tales of characters such as Augustus Baldwin Longstreet’s Ransy Sniffle (Georgia Scenes, 1835), George Washington Harris’s Sut Lovingood (collected as Sut Lovingood: Yarns Spun by a “Nat’l Born Durn’d Fool,” 1867), and Johnson Jones Hooper’s Simon Suggs (Some Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs, Late of the Tallapoosa Volunteers, 1845). The great wave of local color stories that began appearing in literary magazines during the late 1860s owed as much to historical and cultural forces as to literary tastes. The Civil War had made the regions all too aware of one another as their inhabitants traveled to, or experienced vicariously through letters and newspapers, areas of the country that now had names and significance even for remote villages. Unsettled by rapidly changing technologies, such as the railroad and the telegraph, by the increasing racial and ethnic diversity fed by successive waves of immigration and internal migration, and by crumbling class structures and uncertain social mobility, the middle-class reading public looked toward an imagined past located in the very regions which many of them had abandoned for an urban existence. According to Amy Kaplan, this imaginary harmonious past is a “Janus-faced nostalgia” through which readers in an industrial present project images of their desire for a simpler time onto the past as represented by a region (p. 242). Stephanie Foote sees a further paradox in the construction of regionalism in that its narrative techniques, such as dialect, run counter to its program of reinforcing harmony and sameness; however, the speech of rural, uneducated characters also preserves a comfortable distance from standard English, with dialect exotic enough to be fresh and interesting without evoking the accents of immigrants or the urban poor. Yet to imagine the local color landscape as a placid escape from modern life is to ignore the problems that the writers depict. Local color settings may differ from one another, but the problems are universal, such as the threat of violence and child abuse, as in Mary E. Wilkins Freeman’s (1852–1930) Pembroke (1894) and “Old Woman Magoun” (1905); the desperate straits of the elderly poor, as in Sarah Orne Jewett’s (1849–1909) “The Town Poor” (1890) and Freeman’s “A Church Mouse” (1891); the abuses of the mill system, as in Jewett’s “The Gray Mills of Farley” (1898); and the injustices of the banking system in Garland’s “Under the Lion’s Paw” (1891).

REGIONS

New England writers were among the earliest to appear in “Atlantic group” magazines; for example, Rose Terry Cooke’s (1827–1892) “Sally Parson’s Duty” was one of the stories published in the inaugural issue of the Atlantic Monthly in November 1857, and her stories and poetry appeared regularly in Harper’s New Monthly Magazine, Scribner’s Magazine, and the New England Magazine until shortly before her death in 1892. Although Cooke’s poetry was regular in meter and often conventional in sentiment, her fiction depicted a New England in which a decayed Puritan self-righteousness led to stunted emotional lives; more tellingly, Cooke’s characters suffer physical cruelty and domestic abuse, too, as in “The Ring Fetter: A New
England Tragedy” (1859) and “Freedom Wheeler’s Controversy with Providence” (1877). Other major writers of New England local color fiction include Celia Thaxter (1835–1894), Alice Brown (1857–1948), Philander Deming (1829–1915), Rowland Robinson (1833–1900), Jewett, and Freeman. Invoking Herman Melville’s sketches of the Encantadas as a touchstone for her work, Celia Thaxter described the terrain of the Isles of Shoals off the coast of Maine and New Hampshire in a series of essays for the Atlantic Monthly in 1879 and 1880, also publishing poetry and a late work, An Island Garden (1894), before her death the same year. Alice Brown wrote of the fictional New Hampshire village of Tiverton in Meadow Grass (1886) and Tiverton Tales (1899). Brown’s work illustrates what Glazener, Ann Romines, and others see as a common feature of women’s regional fiction: a vision of the domestic sphere as “unapologetically dedicated to women’s pleasure in homemaking and friendship” (Glazener, p. 225). Turning to the wilderness as well as the village as a subject, Philander Deming wrote spare stories of the mountain regions of New York state in Adirondack Stories (1880) and Tompkins, and Other Folks (1885) while Rowland E. Robinson’s sketches and stories of Vermont included essays on rural industries such as sugar-making and marble-quarrying as well as tales of the imaginary town of Danvis.

Among the most critically esteemed of the New England local colorists were Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins (later Freeman). Considered by Willa Cather (1873–1947) to be one of the three masterpieces of American literature, Jewett’s Country of the Pointed Firs appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in four parts from January through September 1896 and contains several features of New England women’s local color fiction. Its unnamed urban narrator moves for the summer to the small, coastal village of Dunnet Landing and becomes the friend and disciple of Mrs. Todd, an herbalist and symbolically a keeper of what Josephine Donovan has called the “subjugated knowledges” of a richly symbolic preindustrial women’s culture. In listening to the residents’ stories, she hears tales of isolation and loss, such as those of Poor Joanna, Captain Littlpage, and Elijah Tilley, and participates in the community’s social gatherings, including the Bowden family reunion. Read by some as the narrator’s initiation into the Dunnet Landing community, the Bowden reunion also affirms “racial purity, global dominance, and white ethnic superiority and solidarity,” according to Elizabeth Ammons (p. 97). Freeman, like Jewett, provided alternative models for women’s lives in her fiction, frequently emphasizing issues of power within communities and characters’ struggles for independence. In the title story of Freeman’s A New England Nun and Other Stories (1891), for example, Louisa Ellis breaks off her long engagement with Joe Dagget and renounces marriage in favor of the pleasures of the orderly and domestic life she has forged for herself, and Hetty Fifield of “A Church Mouse” (1891) barricades herself in the church and faces down the church elders who want to deny her both a place to live and a means of making a living as the sexton.

Contemporary reviewers frequently paired Jewett and Freeman, with Jewett cast as a fine and learned writer of delicate perceptions and Freeman a less-tutored but no less striking example of native genius whose humor redeemed her grim subject matter. An 1891 review essay, “New England in the Short Story,” compares Freeman’s A New England Nun and Other Stories with Sarah Orne Jewett’s Strangers and Wayfarers in terms characteristic of the time: Freeman’s humor and Jewett’s charity toward her characters signify their superior artistry. More striking is the essay’s praise for Jewett’s attempts to portray New England
Irish life—a hint that the writer, and the public, would prefer more tales of “contemporaneous New England” rather than the typical tales of “rural New England of two generations back” (p. 849).

In the Midwest, regionalist writers frequently focused on the raw conditions and grim details of life in the region, although works such as Alice Cary’s *Clovernook; or, Recollections of our Neighborhood in the West* (1852) and *Clovernook, Second Series* (1853), are less stark in their presentation. *Stories of a Western Town* (1893) by Octave Thanet (1850–1934), the pseudonym of Alice French, are set in a lightly fictionalized Davenport, Iowa, although Thanet also wrote stories of southern local color. Like Thanet, Constance Fenimore Woolson wrote local color fiction based in two regions: Michigan in *Castle Nowhere: Lake Country Sketches* (1875) and North Carolina in “Rodman the Keeper” (1877), *For the Major* (1883), and other works. Edward Eggleston’s *The Hoosier School-Master* (1871) and especially E. W. Howe’s *The Story of a Country Town* (1883) exposed the inverse side of small-town life—its violence at a community rather than a domestic level—in such a manner that Howe’s work is considered a precursor to the naturalist school of fiction. Similarly, reviewers compared Joseph Kirkland to Thomas Hardy for his realistic representation of rural Illinois in *Zury, the Meanest Man in Spring County* (1887) and its sequel, *The McVeys* (1888). Later midwestern regionalists such as Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941) and Booth Tarkington (1869–1946) drew from these earlier models; Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio* is modernist in tone and in its portraits of alienated grotesques and fragmented lives, while Tarkington’s novels such as *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918) and *Alice Adams* (1921) present a sociological picture of class disintegration due to external forces and stubborn protagonists. In *The Magnificent Ambersons*, for example, the hero, George Amberson Minafer, defies change by resting on class privilege until the twin forces of industrialism and the automobile figuratively and literally drive him away from the once-great Amberson estate. A different view of the midwestern plains, this time of South Dakota, and the destructive powers of encroaching civilization implicitly informs Zitkala-Ša’s *Old Indian Legends* (1901) and the autobiographical narratives such as “The School Days of an Indian Girl” which she published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1900.

The most important of the first generation of midwestern regionalists, Hamlin Garland (1860–1940), is as important for his manifesto *Crumbling Idols* (1894) as for his collection *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891). In stories such as “Under the Lion’s Paw,” Garland promoted populist ideas, a departure from the ostensibly apolitical writings of the New England local colorists, and his declaration of sentiments on local color is equally provocative. For Garland, local color “means that [the work] has such quality of texture and background that it could not have been written in any other place or by any one else than a native” (p. 54), a direct challenge to those who, like Jewett, were less natives than visitors, and a sentiment that ignored one of the paradoxes of local color fiction: those closest to the region, the natives of several generations’ standing who were untouched by the outside world, were also those least likely to have the education, critical distance, and literary contacts to have their work published. Yet in promoting regionalism as the best hope for a national literature and in defending his version of realistic regionalism during a celebrated debate with romantic regionalist Mary Hartwell Catherwood at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, Garland reinforced the critical legitimacy of local color as a mainstream art form, much as William Dean Howells (1837–1920) had done in his “Editor’s Study” columns (1886–1892) for *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*. 
Southern local color developed as regions within regions, with stories of the Tennessee hill country such as *In the Tennessee Mountains* (1884) by Mary N. Murfree (1850–1922), who used Charles Egbert Craddock as her pseudonym; Murfree’s immensely popular work inspired Sherwood Bonner to visit Murfree and, according to Richard Brodhead’s less-than-flattering assessment, “learn how to ‘do’ Tennessee mountain folk and cash in on Murfree’s success” (p. 119). Worlds away from this smaller region was the Creole culture of Louisiana portrayed by Kate Chopin (1851–1904), Grace King (1852–1932), and Alice Dunbar-Nelson (1875–1935). Set against the social dislocations of the war and of Reconstruction, Chopin’s *Bayou Folk* (1894) and other tales of Creole and Cajun culture explored the region’s complex distinctions of class and race. So incensed was Grace King at what she believed to be the inaccuracies of George Washington Cable’s *Old Creole Days* (1879) that she wrote *Balcony Stories* (1893) in response. Dunbar-Nelson’s *The Goodness of St. Rosque, and Other Stories* (1899) and *Violets and Other Tales* (1895) mix conventional local color stories with coded tales of racial identity like “Sister Josepha,” in which a young girl possibly of mixed race stays in the convent rather than risk sexual exploitation from a prospective guardian. In a subgenre of local color fiction called the “plantation tradition,” stories such as “Marse Chan” from Thomas Nelson Page’s *In Ole Virginia* (1887) presented an idealized version of the South and harmonious relationships between kindly masters and happy, subservient slaves before the Civil War. Joel Chandler Harris’s *Uncle Remus* stories, dialect versions of African American folktales, borrow somewhat from this tradition, but the subversive messages of the tales undercut the idea of white authority central to the plantation tradition. Also choosing to follow the plantation tradition in form, Charles W. Chesnutt subtly reverses its meaning in *The Conjure Woman* (1899). Although Chesnutt follows the formula by having the storytelling ex-slave, Uncle Julius, living on a ruined plantation, Uncle Julius tells his tales only to manipulate the Northern narrator and his wife into granting him the property or privileges that he feels are his by rights. The meanings of Julius’s stories, always understood by the narrator’s sympathetic wife, Annie, and ignored by the narrator himself, reinforce the idea of the inhumanity of slavery.

In the West, writers such as Mark Twain (1835–1910), Bret Harte (1836–1902), Mary Hallock Foote (1847–1938), Owen Wister (1860–1938), Mary Austin (1868–1934), and María Cristina Mena (1893–1965) sought to interpret unfamiliar occupations, such as mining and ranching, as well as unfamiliar Spanish and Native American cultures for a curious eastern audience. Early in his career, Twain published sketches and hoaxes in the western humor vein, such as “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” (1865), which relies on a deadpan delivery, carefully nuanced dialect, contrasts between western and eastern characters, and a plot of a would-be trickster who is tricked. The tensions between literary East and roughneck West also inform Twain’s infamous performance at a dinner for John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892) on 17 December 1877. Delivered to an august company that included Whittier, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), and Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894), “The Whittier Birthday Dinner Speech” caricatured these eminent authors as hard-drinking, knife-carrying card cheats traveling in the California mining camps, a piece of western humor that according to Twain’s friend William Dean Howells provoked not laughter but “a silence, weighing many tons to the square inch” on the part of the “appalled and appalling listeners” (p. 60). Although not a conventional piece of local color fiction, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) bears traces of southwestern humor and regional stories in its accurate use of dialect, its depiction of village life, and its employment of character types. Twain’s sometime friend and later rival, Bret Harte, gained fame with quietly humorous tales of mining towns such as “The Luck of Roaring Camp” and “The Outcasts of Poker Flat,” which established such western types as the principled, well-educated gambler and the “soiled dove” with a heart of gold; later and lesser-known stories such as “Wan Lee, the Pagan” (1874) and “Three Vagabonds of Trinidad” (1900), however, protest racial violence against Chinese immigrants and Native Americans. In the former, Wan Lee, a lively, intelligent, but impish boy who works in a printing office, is “stoned to death . . . by a mob of half-grown boys and Christian school children” (p. 137), an incident that Harte based on anti-Chinese rioting in San Francisco (p. 292). The “overtly anti-imperialist satire” (p. xxi) “Three Vagabonds of Trinidad” evokes and deliberately reverses the Jackson’s Island episode of *Huckleberry Finn*: in it, Li Tce and “Injin Jim” escape to an island after a series of misadventures, rightly fearing a possible lynching at the hands of those who, like prominent citizen Mr. Parkin Skinner, believe it is their “manifest destiny to clar them out” (p. 160). Their sanctuary is invaded by Skinner’s son Bob, who first wastes their provisions and then betrays them to a murderous mob of townspeople.

Owen Wister remains best known as the author of *The Virginian* (1902), but several of his stories of the West appeared in *Harper’s* in the early 1890s, including at least three featuring the young ranch hand Lin McLean. The earliest of this series of stories, which were
later collected and expanded as *Lin McLean* (1897), is “How Lin McLean Went East” (December 1892), a chronicle of its protagonist’s long-announced and often delayed trip to Boston and his decision after a few days there to buy a ticket back to Rawlins, Wyoming. Less typical is the unromantic view of Wister’s “The Promised Land” (April 1894), in which a pioneer family traveling to the Okanogan River is beset by random violence brought on by Indians despoiled by what the story suggests is the imperfect slum of the East: a weak-willed man who illegally sells liquor to the Indians and cares for his epileptic son. Although their characters sometimes tend toward the conventional, Mary Hallock Foote’s stories and novels set in western mining country, such as *The Lead-Horse Claim* (1882) and *Coeur d’Alene* (1894), are notable for their portrayal of a fresh and inhospitable terrain, one that can decisively determine a character’s fate, as when Rose Gilroy disappears into the “skeleton flood” (p. 96) of the lava fields near the Snake River in “Maverick” (1894). Adaptation to an inhospitable landscape, this time the Southwest, is the subject of Mary Austin’s *The Land of Little Rain* (1903); framed by a narrative voice that establishes the land as a character, the sketches in this volume feature regionalism as ecological and ethnographic observation. Although they often take place in Mexico and Spain, Maria Cristina Mena’s stories such as “The Education of Popo” (*Century*, March 1914) explore the clash of Anglo and Mexican cultures and class hierarchies in the border regions of the Southwest. Like the South, the West is less a single region than a multitude of regions; it is united by habits of mind that go far beyond simply defining the space as wild or as existing in opposition to the East.

**EPILOGUE**

By the late 1890s local color as a genre was dying out, eclipsed by the popular historical romances of the day, by tales of Americans adventuring in distant lands, including the work of Stephen Crane, Jack London, and Richard Harding Davis, and by other forms of realism, such as naturalism and Jamesian dramas of consciousness, that made local color fiction seem limited by comparison. As Charles Dudley Warner wrote in his “Editor’s Study” column for *Harper’s* in 1896, “We do not hear much now of ‘local color’, that has rather gone out. . . . [S]o much color was produced that the market broke down” (p. 961). Although dialect stories and rural novels such as E. N. Westcott’s *David Harum* (1898) and Irving Bacheller’s *Eben Holden* (1900) continued to be popular in the first decades of the twentieth century, the market for serious rather than popular local color fiction dwindled. Other regional writers would thrive in the twentieth century, among them Willa Cather and William Faulkner, but the influence of modernism, a disdain for what was thought to be local color’s nostalgia and sentimentality, and an impatience with the limitations of the form ensured that the new literatures of regions announced themselves as art on a national scale rather than as regional representations on a small one.

See also *The Country of the Pointed Firs; In the Tennessee Mountains; A New England Nun and Other Stories; New South; Realism; Slang, Dialect, and Other Types of Marked Language; Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*

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RELIGION

See The Bible; Catholics; Christianity; Christian Science; Jews; Mormons

RESORTS

By 1870 vacation and travel destinations where visitors could enjoy the pleasures of time away from work and home had become an established part of American life. Though resorts varied in size, cost, and variety of entertainments offered, their numbers grew exponentially as the size of America’s vacationing public expanded. While the elite had been “taking the waters” for both health and amusement at resorts such as White Sulphur Springs, Virginia; Newport, Rhode Island; Long Branch, New Jersey; and Saratoga Springs, New York, since the eighteenth century, many historians argue that as early as the 1820s, members of the emerging middle class were touring New York State’s Hudson River Valley, Ballston Spa, and the Lake Champlain and Niagara Falls regions.

With the rapid expansion of the middle class, as businesses required increasing numbers of white-collar workers, the demand for vacation accommodations for this group fueled development. No longer primarily the province of the elite, resorts by the 1870s catered to a middle class who had come to view summer vacations as a necessity. Newspapers and magazines depicted resorts as destinations that offered businessmen rest and rejuvenation from their constant “brain work” and relieved their families of the swelter of summers in the city. Yearly visits to resorts by this time had become a marker of middle-class life and identity, and the period between 1850 and 1900 saw a vast development of such facilities, which sprang up along lakes and the seashore, in the mountains and countryside of all regions. While newspaper society columns continued charting the movements of the rich and famous at the fashionable eastern resorts such as Saratoga, Long Branch, and Newport, more affordable resorts were in such demand that any small village along a rail line could market its location as a summer travel destination.

Historians studying resorts in the United States note their importance as locations for carving out social class identity. Thomas Chambers, for example, investigates early resorts, contending that mineral springs resorts were sites where the “nation’s social and political leaders experimented with the idea that they formed a coherent culture and an elite class” (p. xiii). Cindy Aron’s history of vacationing in the United States, though not restricted to resorts, shows how resorts began as locations for the elite but later appealed to first a middle-class and then, by the first decades of the twentieth century, working-class clientele. The tension between leisure and work, particularly middle-class anxiety about the morally dangerous aspects of leisure, is central to her study. Jon Sterngass, examining Saratoga Springs, New York; Newport, Rhode Island; and Coney Island, New York, traces the shift in resorts’ cultural meanings during the nineteenth century; he argues that while early in the century resorts functioned as places where visitors could act out behaviors not indulged in everyday life, by the end of the century they had become a commodity, marketed to consumers at different social and economic levels of society. Theodore Corbett, using Saratoga Springs as his prime example, argues that a resort’s success depended upon the hosts (i.e., developers) who created the attractions “that would appeal to the broadest respectable public” (p. 11).

Novels of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century bear out interpretations focused on social class. In 1873, for example, Mark Twain (1835–1910) and Charles Dudley Warner (1829–1911) caricatured in The Gilded Age gradations of American society, depicting Newport as the resort of choice of