

November 11, 2024

Scientific Council of the Faculty of Philosophy
University of Niš
Niš, Serbia

Subject: Review Submission for *American Classics Revisited: A Textbook in American Literature* by Ana Kocić Stanković

Dear Members of the Scientific Council:

I hereby submit my review of the manuscript *American Classics Revisited: A Textbook in American Literature* by **Ana Kocić Stanković**, as appointed by the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, Serbia, on September 16, 2024 (official Decision number 279/1-10-6-01).

Overview

Ana Kocić Stanković's *American Classics Revisited* is a structured and engaging introduction to American literature, especially beneficial for students and readers new to this field, including non-native English speakers. The textbook spans American literature from the colonial period through the 20th century, with chapters dedicated to important literary eras and movements. Each chapter offers insightful study questions, summaries, and selected readings, guiding students through the material and encouraging critical engagement.

Chapter-by-Chapter Review

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Why (American) Literature?

The opening chapter skillfully frames American literature within its unique identity, introducing foundational questions of what makes literature "American." By addressing early influences and themes of identity and nationhood, this chapter provides readers with a clear framework for exploring the texts that follow.

Chapter 2 – Colonial and Early National Literature

This chapter introduces readers to formative works of the colonial and early national periods, focusing on influential texts like Puritan writings and Enlightenment ideals. Including authors such as Washington Irving enriches students' understanding of early American literary identity.

Chapter 3 – Transcendentalism and Its Impact

The author presents key Transcendentalist figures like Emerson and Thoreau, whose ideas on self-reliance and spiritual exploration define much of the American literary Renaissance. This selection provides readers with an inspiring look into themes of individualism and nature, complemented by the inclusion of writers like Margaret Fuller.

Chapter 4 – American Literary Independence

Focusing on Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville, this chapter explores darker Romanticism and the psychological elements within American literature, showcasing each author's thematic contributions. It is a fascinating exploration of human nature and existential themes within American Romanticism.

Chapter 5 – Voices of American Poetic Identity

This chapter contrasts Whitman's expansive vision with Dickinson's introspective style, highlighting the diversity within American poetic traditions. By examining how each poet approaches themes of self and nationhood, this chapter provides a rich exploration of American identity.

Chapter 6 – Realism and the American Sensibility

This chapter provides a strong introduction to American Realism through Twain's humor and James's nuanced social commentary. These authors' responses to post-Civil War America provide valuable insights into socio-economic shifts, grounding students in the social and psychological realism of the period.

Chapter 7 – Modernism's Disillusionment

Successfully capturing the existential questioning of Modernism, this chapter presents Hemingway and Fitzgerald within the context of post-World War I disillusionment. This focus offers students a well-rounded understanding of Modernism as a transformative literary period.

Chapter 8 – History, Race, and American Literature's Past

The concluding chapter ties together the classic American canon with modern explorations of race and history, particularly through Faulkner and Morrison. This section serves as a compelling bridge to contemporary issues in American literature, highlighting how literature addresses both personal and collective identity.

Highlights

The textbook's structured approach aligns neatly with the traditional American literature syllabus. Each chapter focuses on specific literary movements or themes, guiding readers through American literature's evolution. Authors like Emerson, Whitman, Hemingway, and Toni Morrison are explored, highlighting their literary contributions and socio-cultural significance. The accessible language is a valuable asset for non-native readers, and the study questions encourage critical thinking by prompting students to explore deeper meanings within the texts.

Areas for Further Development

While the book effectively introduces core texts and authors, expanding coverage to include contemporary voices could deepen readers' understanding and relatability to American literature. Although copyright limitations mean the book focuses on public-domain texts, this


is understandable and could be supplemented with instructor-provided materials. A few chapters might also benefit from expanded discussions of foundational texts to give students additional insight. These suggestions, however, may be included in the 2nd edition of the book.

Overall Recommendation

American Classics Revisited offers a valuable introduction to American literature, particularly for students encountering these works for the first time. Its structured approach, accessible language, and thoughtful questions make it a strong foundational text. I hereby recommend the manuscript for publication, as it meets the necessary academic and scholarly standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript. Please feel free to reach out if further clarification or discussion is needed.

Respectfully yours,



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