



# American Culture and Melodrama in the 19th century

Ενότητα 3: Women and Melodrama

Ζωή Δέτση ΤΜΗΜΑ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ





# Άδειες Χρήσης

- Το παρόν εκπαιδευτικό υλικό υπόκειται σε άδειες χρήσης Creative Commons.
- Για εκπαιδευτικό υλικό, όπως εικόνες, που υπόκειται σε άλλου τύπου άδειας χρήσης, η άδεια χρήσης αναφέρεται ρητώς.



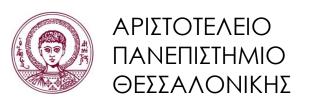


# Χρηματοδότηση

- Το παρόν εκπαιδευτικό υλικό έχει αναπτυχθεί στα πλαίσια του εκπαιδευτικού έργου του διδάσκοντα.
- Το έργο «Ανοικτά Ακαδημαϊκά Μαθήματα στο Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης» έχει χρηματοδοτήσει μόνο τη αναδιαμόρφωση του εκπαιδευτικού υλικού.
- Το έργο υλοποιείται στο πλαίσιο του Επιχειρησιακού Προγράμματος «Εκπαίδευση και Δια Βίου Μάθηση» και συγχρηματοδοτείται από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση (Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο) και από εθνικούς πόρους.









### Women and Melodrama





# Περιεχόμενα ενότητας

- 1. Fashion (1845)
- 2. Leonore; or, The World's Own (1857)



# **Objectives**

 This section examines the representations of femininity in melodramatic plays written by early American women. The students will approach the plays from a critical perspective exploring how the two female playwrights use melodramatic techniques in an attempt to disrupt the dominant gender ideology of the time.



#### Points to consider

- How do women characters in melodramatic narratives relate to language and communication?
- What kind of roles do women characters occupy in melodrama?
- How is patriarchal culture presented?



# **Fashion (1845)**

Anna Cora Mowatt (1819-1870)



# Anna Cora Ogden (1819-1870)



Εικόνα 1



Εικόνα 2



## **Biographical information**

- Daughter of a prosperous merchant, she was born in France and at the age of 6 her family moved to America.
- She attended private schools but was primarily educated at home.
- At age 15, she eloped with James Mowatt (1805–
  1849), a prominent and wealthy New York lawyer
  who encouraged her to continue her education and
  to write.
- In 1853, Anna married William F. Ritchie (? 1868).

## **Books (1/2)**

- Pelayo, or The Cavern of Covadonga (1836)
- Reviewers Reviewed (1837, pseud. "Isabel")
- The Fortune Hunter (pseud. "Helen Berkley")
- Evelyn (pseud. "Helen Berkley")
- A biography of Goethe (pseud. "Henry C. Browning")
- Articles in Graham's Magazine and Godey's Lady's Book and other periodicals.



# **Books (2/2)**

- Mimic Life; or Before and Behind the Curtain (1855)
- Twin Roses (1857)
- Mute Singer (1861)
- Fairy Fingers (1865)
- The Clergyman's Wife, and Other Sketches (1867)



## **Plays**

- Fashion (1845). Adapted for the 21st century and performed at Ohio Wesleyan University in 2008. The modern script uses 7 men, 6 women, minimal staging, and runs for about 2 hours.
- Armand, the Child of the People (1847).



## **Acting Career**



Εικόνα 3

- In 1841, Anna became a public reader due to financial problems.
- Performed leading roles in Shakespeare, melodramas, and her own plays. She toured the United States and Europe.
- Autobiography of an Actress (1853).



## Fashion: social comedy/ satire

- Contemporary urban life.
- Class roles and distinctions.
- Fashionable codes of behavior / "drawingroom" society.
- Social issues: America's obsession with financial success/ market economy/ selfalienation/ masculine materialistic ethos/ the new ideology of industrial economy.



# Gender ideology of the 19th century

- The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860
- Market economy/ division of spheres of activity: public and domestic.
- Women's magazines (conduct books).
- Piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.



## The Ideal of Real Womanhood

 American women often felt they did not live up to the ideal of True Womanhood; some of them blamed themselves, some challenged the standard, some tried to keep the virtues and enlarge the scope of womanhood. Somehow through this mixture of challenge and acceptance, of change and continuity, the True Woman evolved into the New Woman.



## Women's Movements

- Social Reform.
- First feminist movements.
- The Seneca Falls Convention (1848).



# Leonore; or, The World's Own (1857)

Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910)



#### **Julia Ward Howe**



Εικόνα 4



Portrait of Julia Ward Howe, ca. 1898. From the Julia Ward Howe Papers, 1857-1961. Schlesinger Library, Raddliffe Institute.

Εικόνα 5



## A proto-feminist drama

- Social context: social protests, women's movements.
- Theme: sexual double standard/ women's position within American social, cultural, and ideological structures.
- Prototypical feminist drama: a woman's transition from passive repression and denial to independence and self-definition.



#### **American Feminism**

- Seneca Falls Convention (1848) The Declaration of Sentiments.
- American Women Suffrage Association.
- Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
- Political parity with men, higher education, reform of divorce and child custody laws, protection of women's property, and suffrage.



## **Literary Career**

- 1862: Battle Hymn of the Republic.
- 1870: Woman's Journal (weekly).
- 1874: Sex and Education (a defense of coeducation).
- Poems: Passion Flowers (1854), ), Words for the Hour (1857), Later Lyrics (1866) and At Sunset (1910).
- Plays: Leonora (1857) and Hippolytus (1864).



## Leonore; or, The World's Own

- Romantic tragedy: poetic language/ intensity of passion.
- A powerful story.
- A climactic array of events.
- A female character whose psychological transformation sets the action in swift motion.
- Radicalism which is softened only by her technique of distant place and time as well as the death of the heroine in the final scene of the play.



## Signs, images, and metaphors

- Idealized femininity the object of the villagers' gaze/ allegorical figure for virtue.
- Sinister threat against the established order of the small village community/ symbol of uncontrolled sexuality.
- Image of disorder.
- "Fallen" woman.
- Social outcast.



## Sexuality and social control

- Mid-19th-century medical and etiquette texts linked sexual control with national progress.
- Virtue and self-denial carried political and economic connotations.
- Class distinction: Middle-classes from lower classes by adopting a specific set of sexual values - male continence and female passionlessness.



# New image of femininity (1/3)

- Refusal to assume the position of the victim.
- Reversal of the traditional roles of seducer and seduced/ traditional male-female power relations.
- Becomes the agent of action.
- Moves toward autonomy and power.
- Criticizes the idea of women as sexual objects.



# New image of femininity (2/3)

- Polarized representations of negative and positive femininity.
- Women are defined in terms of what they represent in man's desire.
- "Women who reject or are ambivalent about the female role frighten themselves and society so much that their ostracism and selfdestructiveness probably begin very early" (Phyllis Chesler, 56).



# New image of femininity (3/3)

- Gothic atmosphere: mysterious scenes of manipulation, betrayal, false appearances, concealed identities.
- A "monstrous woman," woman marked as "Other."
- Feminine disruption of male order.
- Descent into "madness."
- Death/self-authorship.



## Σημείωμα Χρήσης Έργων Τρίτων

- Το Έργο αυτό κάνει χρήση των ακόλουθων έργων:
- Εικόνες/Σχήματα/Διαγράμματα/Φωτογραφίες
- Εικόνα 1: Copyright, <a href="http://www.eapoe.org/images/mowattac.jpg">http://www.eapoe.org/images/mowattac.jpg</a>
- Εικόνα 2: Copyright, <a href="http://media-1.web.britannica.com/eb-media/51/21551-004-A194311D.jpg">http://media-1.web.britannica.com/eb-media/51/21551-004-A194311D.jpg</a>
- Εικόνα 3: CC BY SA, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/10/Anna Cora Mowatt NYPL 834066.jpg
- Εικόνα 4: Copyright, <a href="https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/b2/af/8b/b2af8bd197114ff0b58bab1c5d7ad01f.jpg">https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/b2/af/8b/b2af8bd197114ff0b58bab1c5d7ad01f.jpg</a>
- Εικόνα 5: Copyright, <a href="http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/images/howe.jpg">http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/images/howe.jpg</a>



# Σημείωμα Αναφοράς

Copyright Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Ζωή Δέτση. «American Culture and Melodrama in the 19th century. Women and Melodrama». Έκδοση: 1.0. Θεσσαλονίκη 2014. Διαθέσιμο από τη δικτυακή διεύθυνση: http://eclass.auth.gr/courses/OCRS450/



# Σημείωμα Αδειοδότησης

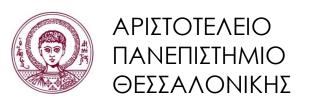
Το παρόν υλικό διατίθεται με τους όρους της άδειας χρήσης Creative Commons Αναφορά - Παρόμοια Διανομή [1] ή μεταγενέστερη, Διεθνής Έκδοση. Εξαιρούνται τα αυτοτελή έργα τρίτων π.χ. φωτογραφίες, διαγράμματα κ.λ.π., τα οποία εμπεριέχονται σε αυτό και τα οποία αναφέρονται μαζί με τους όρους χρήσης τους στο «Σημείωμα Χρήσης Έργων Τρίτων».



Ο δικαιούχος μπορεί να παρέχει στον αδειοδόχο ξεχωριστή άδεια να χρησιμοποιεί το έργο για εμπορική χρήση, εφόσον αυτό του ζητηθεί.

[1] http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/







# Τέλος ενότητας

Επεξεργασία: <Χριστίνα Παπαχαρίτου> Θεσσαλονίκη, Εαρινό Εξάμηνο 2014-2015







# Σημειώματα

# Διατήρηση Σημειωμάτων

Οποιαδήποτε αναπαραγωγή ή διασκευή του υλικού θα πρέπει να συμπεριλαμβάνει:

- το Σημείωμα Αναφοράς
- το Σημείωμα Αδειοδότησης
- τη δήλωση Διατήρησης Σημειωμάτων
- το Σημείωμα Χρήσης Έργων Τρίτων (εφόσον υπάρχει)

μαζί με τους συνοδευόμενους υπερσυνδέσμους.

