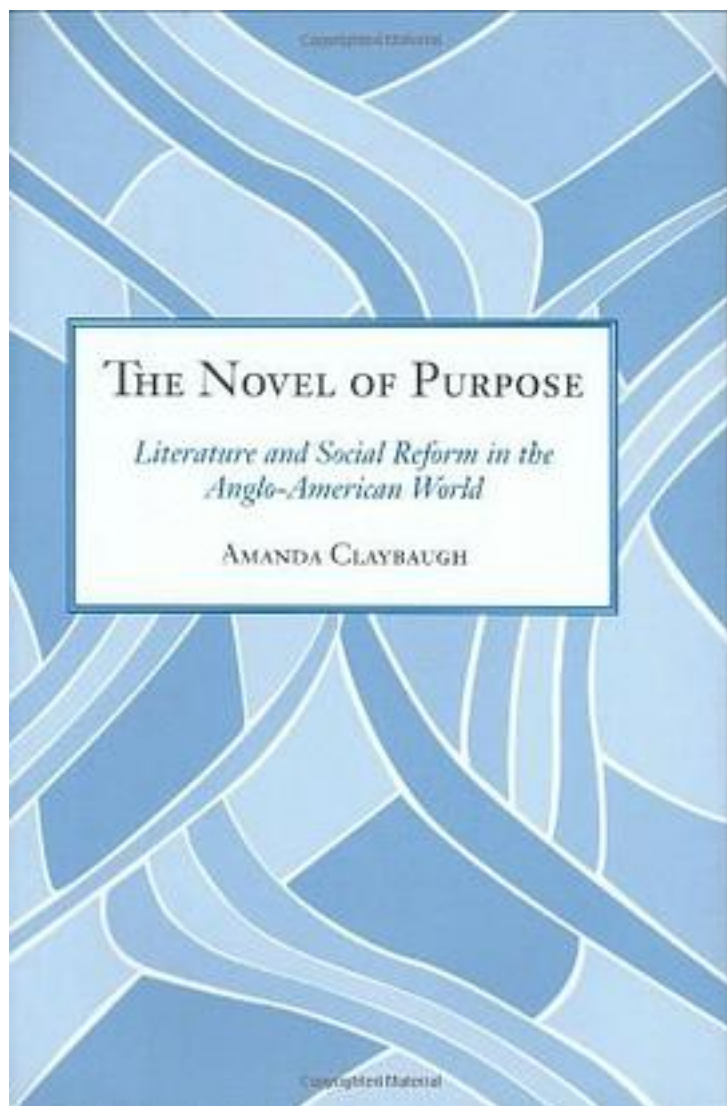


The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World



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In the nineteenth century, Great Britain and the United States shared a single literary marketplace that linked the reform movements, as well as the literatures, of the two nations. The writings of transatlantic reformers—antislavery, temperance, and suffrage activists—gave novelists a new sense of purpose and prompted them to invent new literary forms. The result was a distinctively Anglo-American realism, in which novelists, conceiving of themselves as reformers, sought to act upon their readers—and, through their readers, the world. Indeed, reform became so predominant that many novelists borrowed from reformist writings even though they were skeptical of reform itself. Among them are some of the century's most important authors: Anne Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Elizabeth Stoddard, and Mark Twain. *The Novel of Purpose* proposes a new way of understanding social reform in Great Britain and the United States. Amanda Claybaugh offers readings that connect reformist agitation to the formal features of literary works and argues for a method of transatlantic study that attends not only to nations, but also to the many groups that collaborate across national boundaries.

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