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Sommario/riassunto	David R. Shumway contends that American literature is the product of study - the deliberate invention of a discipline seeking to define the character and legitimate the existence of a specifically American civilization. He traces the various reconstitutions of American literature by examining the discipline's practices and techniques, discourses and structures, paradigms and unstated assumptions. This genealogy begins around 1890, when American literature as defined by institutions outside the academy, such as magazines and publishing houses, acquired much of the ideology it would display in la

