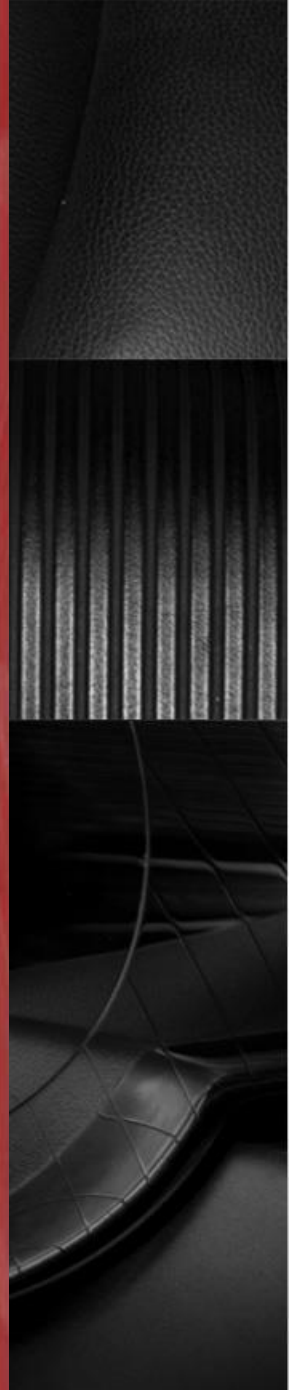


Realism

1855-1870





What exactly is Realism?

- A faithful representation of reality in literature
- A reaction against Romanticism
- Emphasis on development of believable characters.
- Written in natural vernacular, or dialect.
- Portraits of REAL life with all its grit
- Finding meaning in commonplace



What brought about Realism?

- The Civil War
- The experience of war- little interest in imaginative / romantic literature
- Cultural Divide/Frontier life (conflicts with Native Americans, the hardships of pioneer life)
- The urbanization and industrialization of America
- The urban experience (cities with poverty, slums, crime)
- Increasing rates of democracy and literacy
- The emerging middle class



Literary Realism

- **Driven by scientific and technological changes (see it → believe it)**
 - **The camera captured reality (i.e. Matthew Brady's Civil War photographs)**
- **American writers felt the need to observe and describe their settings and characters with as much accuracy as possible**
 - **accurate depictions of setting, customs, manners and speech**

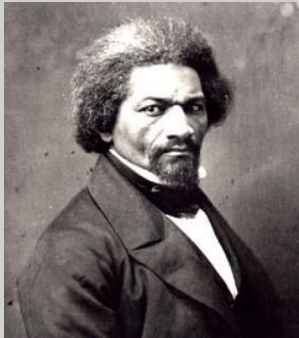


Literary Aspects of Realism

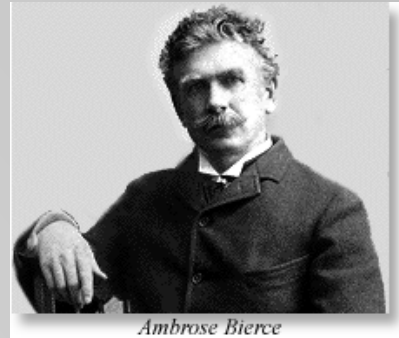
- reflected the diversity of the nation
- portrayed ordinary life, characters and events in an objective, almost factual way, free from subjective prejudice, idealism, or romantic color
- the promise and problems of America:
 - urban poverty/slums
 - farm struggles
 - labor unrest
 - conflicts in the West
 - the horrors of the Civil War led to uncertainty about the future
 - struggle for freedom (especially immigrants, women, African-Americans)

Realist Writers

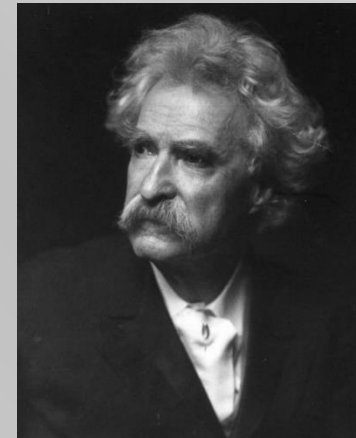
- Frederick Douglass



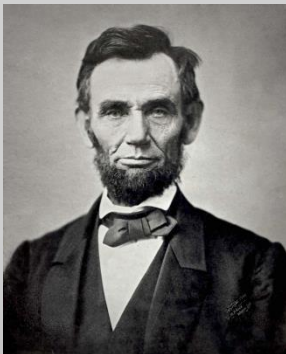
- Ambrose Bierce



- Mark Twain (Samuel Clemmons)



- Abraham Lincoln



- Kate Chopin

