

Realistic Period in America (1865-1900)

□ Background:

■ "The Gilded Age"

- Idealized progress/self-made man

- Era of millionaire manufacturer

- Industrialist-capitalist democracy created turbulence

- Severe labor disputes

- Influx of cheap immigrant labor

■ "Social Darwinism"

- Survival of the fittest

Realistic Period in America (cont.) (1865-1900)

- Growing disillusionment, skepticism, and alienation
 - Promise of America Dream “betrayed”
 - Scientific revolution at variance with older religious views
 - Passing of the physical frontier
 - Enormous audience for authors
 - Rapid growth of education
 - Rise of mass-circulation magazines
 - International Copyright Act
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Realistic Period in America (1865-1900)

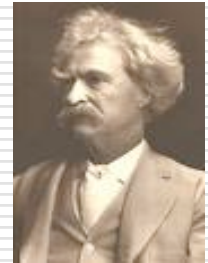
□ Realism Movement

- Believers in pragmatism
 - Pluralistic (democratic)
 - Attentive to context (common, average)
 - Relativistic truth and value
 - Immediate consequences to specific actions
 - High premium on conduct and ethical concerns
 - Ultimate of middle-class art
 - Bourgeois life and manners
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Realistic Period in American Literature (1865-1900)

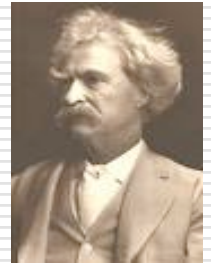
- Literature reflected/characterized the time and its
 - ethical issues and individual experiences
 - worn-out conventions
 - corrupting societal influences
 - Result:
 - Characterization became central
 - Chief subject matter became middle-class society
 - Writers became liberating voice through use of comic, often satiric tones
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Samuel L. Clemens (1835-1910)



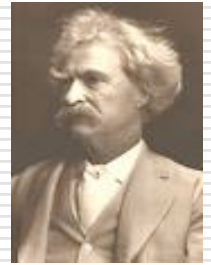
- ❑ “Mark Twain” pseudonym
 - ❑ Strong literary influence
 - Grew up in Hannibal, Missouri (on Mississippi)
 - ❑ Town was a Pre-Civil War commerce hub
 - ❑ River was pathway for westward travelers
 - Varied influential life experiences
 - ❑ Riverboat pilot, miner, journalist, world traveler, prolific reader
 - ❑ Chief lecturer on lyceum (adult education) circuit
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Samuel L. Clemens (1835-1910)



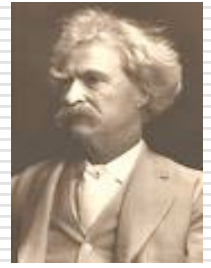
- Deep moral and humanitarian roots
 - Vocal opponent of racism/imperialism
 - Use of regional dialect led to posthumous accusations of Twain as a racist/bigot
 - Rejected conventional religion and conventional patriotism
 - Experienced personal/financial tragedies
 - Indignant towards corruption, sham, and hypocrisy of American life
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Samuel L. Clemens (1835-1910)



- Writing style: Realistic
 - Vigorous, realistic, colloquial speech (dialect)
 - Considered America's greatest humorist and satirist
 - Liberal and progressive themes
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Samuel L. Clemens (1835-1910)



□ *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

- Twain's greatest achievement
 - Contender for Greatest American Novel
 - "All modern American literature comes from *Huckleberry Finn*....There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since." – Ernest Hemingway
 - Charm and humor + acute social commentary
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