

Unit 8

REGIONAL REALISM

Depicting the Local in American Literature
1865–1900

Authors and Works

Featured in the Video:

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (novel), “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses” (satire, literary criticism)
Charles W. Chesnutt, “The Goophered Grapevine” and “The Wife of His Youth” (stories)
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (novel), “At the ‘Cadian Ball” and “The Storm” (stories)

Discussed in This Unit:

Bret Harte, “The Outcasts of Poker Flat” (story)
Joel Chandler Harris, “The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story,” “Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox” (stories)
Sarah Orne Jewett, “The White Heron,” “The Foreigner” (stories)
Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, “A New England Nun,” “The Revolt of ‘Mother’” (stories)
Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), excerpts from *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (autobiography)
Alexander Posey, letters of Fus Fixico (stories, political satire), poems
Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), “Impressions of an Indian Childhood,” “The School Days of an Indian Girl,” “An Indian Teacher among Indians” (autobiographical essays)

Overview Questions

- How do regionalist writings reflect the distinct cultures and experiences of different ethnic groups?
- How do realist texts represent gender? Are women authors’ interpretations of realism different from male authors’ interpretations? How?

■ What kinds of narrative conventions structure oral and visual autobiographies?

■ What regional and ethnic dialects were represented in late-nineteenth-century literature? Why were dialect stories so popular in late-nineteenth-century America?

■ What are the distinguishing characteristics of realism? What cultural values does realism reflect and promote?

■ What is regionalist writing? What historical events and cultural anxieties fueled regionalism’s popularity in the late nineteenth century?

■ In the popular imagination of the late nineteenth century, what distinguished certain regions of the country from one another?

■ In what ways can regionalist texts be representative of the general “American” experience?

■ How did technology bind together the United States in the late nineteenth century?

■ What is dialect? How did different authors represent dialect?

■ How do narrators affect the tone of a fictional text? What kinds of narrators emerge in realist writing of the late nineteenth century?

■ What is a trickster figure? What cultural work do trickster figures perform?

■ How do regionalist texts participate in or challenge racial stereotypes?

■ How does class-consciousness inflect realist representations of American life? What classes of people are depicted in realist texts?

Learning Objectives

After students have viewed the video, read the headnotes and literary selections in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, and explored related archival materials on the *American Passages* Web site, they should be able to

1. understand the basic tenets of realism;
2. discuss the impact on American literature and culture of regionalist writers' emphasis on geographical settings and distinctive customs;
3. discuss the impact of race and gender on representations of regional cultures;
4. discuss the cultural values and assumptions that inform phonetic representations of racial and regional dialects in late-nineteenth-century American literature.

Instructor Overview

Midway through his adventures, Huck Finn comes to the “strange and unregular” conclusion that telling the truth might be the best way both to narrate his experiences and to accomplish his own ends. In a speech that is characteristically simultaneously humorous and profound, Mark Twain has Huck meditate on the nature of truth:

I says to myself, I reckon a body that ups and tells the truth when he is in a tight place, is taking considerable many resks, though I ain't had no experience, and can't say for certain; but it looks so to me, anyway; and yet here's a case where I'm blest if it don't look to me like the truth is better, and actuly *safer*, than a lie. I must lay it by in my mind, and think it over some time or other, it's so kind of strange and unregular.

Huck's radical decision to “up and tell the truth” despite the “resks” epitomizes the stylistic and thematic transformations shaping American literature during the second half of the nineteenth century. A new commitment to the accurate representation of American life as it was experienced by ordinary Americans infused literature with a new “realist” aesthetic. Realism was characterized by its uncompromising literal representations of daily life, and by its resistance to the emotional extravagance and fanciful settings that had characterized Romantic and sentimental fiction. This passion for finding and presenting the truth led many American practitioners of realism to explore characters, places, and events that had never before seemed appropriate subject matter for literature. American audiences, for their part, evinced a new willingness to read

about unrefined and even ugly subjects in the interest of gaining authentic accounts of the world around them.

Many writers expressed their realist aesthetic by emphasizing the particularities of geographic settings, evoking the distinctive customs, speech, and culture of specific regions of the United States in their work. This attention to the peculiarities of place flourished after the Civil War, as Americans began to conceive of themselves as part of a single, unified nation and as curiosity grew about regions of the country that had once seemed too far off and strange to matter. Regional realism may also have developed as an act of nostalgia and conservation in response to the rapid postwar industrialization and homogenization that was threatening older, traditional ways of life. By chronicling the specific details of regional culture, regional realism preserved a record of ways of life and habits of speech that were suddenly in danger of disappearing as a result of the newspapers, railroads, and mass-produced consumer goods that were standardizing American culture. Many regionalist writers became accomplished at transcribing the authentic rhythms and idioms of local dialect in their efforts to make their characters' dialogue mimic the way people really talked. Literalized, phonetic spellings forced readers to pronounce words as speakers of a regional dialect would pronounce them.

A commitment to capturing accurately the realities and peculiarities of regional culture distinguishes all of the authors featured in Unit 8, “Regional Realism: Depicting the Local in American Literature, 1865–1900.” As they recorded and commented on the distinctive speech and customs that distinguished specific geographical areas, these writers also struggled with the role of class and gender in local life and in the construction of American identity. This unit explores the regional representations of a wide variety of late-nineteenth-century texts, including works composed by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), Bret Harte, Joel Chandler Harris, Sarah Orne Jewett, Kate Chopin, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Charles W. Chesnutt, Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), Alexander Posey, and Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin). The unit provides contextual background and classroom materials designed to explore the way these writers represented the distinguishing characteristics of American life in the South, in the West, in New

England, and on the Great Plains. The video for Unit 8 focuses on three influential practitioners of regional realism in the South: Mark Twain, Charles W. Chesnutt, and Kate Chopin. Twain used realism and regional dialect in his masterpiece, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to challenge readers to come to new conclusions about the role of race and class in America. His complex portrait of race relations in the 1840s continues to inspire controversy. Charles W. Chesnutt adopted the regional realist style to explore the contradictions of life on the “color line” between black and white society and to challenge racial stereotypes. Kate Chopin depicted the exotic culture of Creole and Cajun Louisiana, offering a controversial exploration of the constraints placed on women’s individuality and sexuality in the process. All of these writers were committed to providing realistic representations of their local cultures and to constructing complicated, believable characters who faced complex moral dilemmas about the nature of their American identities.

In its coverage of these writers and texts, the video introduces students to the basic tenets of the aesthetic of regional realism and foregrounds the movement’s relationship to the social and political challenges facing post-Civil War America. How do these texts both reflect and construct cultural values? How do regionalist writings portray the distinct cultures and experiences of different ethnic groups? How do they explore issues of gender? How do regional realist texts record the linguistic specificity of regional speech? Why were representations of dialect so popular in late-nineteenth-century America? In what ways did regional texts participate in the construction of a broader, more general “American” character? Unit 8 helps answer these questions by offering suggestions on how to connect these writers to their cultural contexts, to other units in the series, and to other key writers of the era. The curriculum materials expand the video’s introduction to regional realism by exploring writers who represented different regions and different concerns about class and ethnicity, such as Bret Harte (who focused on the culture of the Old West in California), Joel Chandler Harris (a white writer who recorded the dialect and folktales of African American slave culture), and Zitkala-Ša (a Sioux woman who found herself caught between European American customs and traditional Indian culture).

The video, the archive, and the curriculum mate-

rials situate these writers within several of the historical contexts and artistic movements that shaped their texts: (1) the development of “parlor culture” and ideals of domestic gentility; (2) Native American oral and visual autobiographical expressions; (3) the role of journalistic ideals in the development of the realist aesthetic; (4) the centrality of the “trickster” figure to expressions of ethnic identity; (5) the importance of developments in the study of anatomy and photography in visual expressions of realism.

The archive and the curriculum materials suggest how these authors and texts relate to those covered in other *American Passages* units: How have American ideas about realistic representation and the possibility of recording “truth” changed over time? How have realist ideals shaped contemporary aesthetics? How did the use of dialect impact later authors’ dialogue and poetry? How have American ideas about the relationship between specific regions and the country as a whole changed over time?

Student Overview

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a new commitment to the truthful, accurate representation of American life as it was experienced by ordinary individuals infused literature with a new “realist” aesthetic. Realism was characterized by its uncompromising, literal representations of the particularities of the material world and the human condition. This passion for finding and presenting the truth led many American practitioners of realism to explore characters, places, and events that had never before seemed appropriate subject matter for literature. American audiences, for their part, evinced a new willingness to read about unrefined and even ugly or distasteful subjects in the interest of gaining authentic accounts of the world around them.

Many writers expressed their realist aesthetic by emphasizing the particularities of geographic settings, evoking the distinctive customs, speech, and culture of specific regions of the United States in their work. This attention to the peculiarities of place flourished after the Civil War, perhaps as a celebration of the new unification of a country long

divided by political, racial, and religious differences. Regional realism may also have developed in response to the rapid postwar industrialization and homogenization that was destroying older, traditional ways of life. By chronicling the specific details of regional culture, regional realism preserved a record of ways of life and habits of speech that were suddenly in danger of disappearing as a result of the newspapers, railroads, and mass-produced consumer goods that were standardizing American culture. Many regionalist writers became accomplished at transcribing the authentic rhythms and idioms of local dialect in their efforts to make their characters' dialogue mimic the way people really talked. Literalized, phonetic spellings forced readers to pronounce words as speakers of a regional dialect would pronounce them.

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ers also struggled with the role of class and gender in local life and in the construction of American identity. As the video for Unit 8 makes clear, Mark Twain, Charles W. Chesnutt, and Kate Chopin adopted very different strategies in their efforts to provide realistic depictions of regional culture. Twain used realism and regional dialect in his masterpiece, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to challenge readers to come to new conclusions about the role of race and class in America. His complex evocation of racial tension continues to inspire controversy. Charles W. Chesnutt adopted the regional realist style to explore the contradictions of life on the "color line" between black and white society and to challenge racial stereotypes. Kate Chopin depicted the exotic culture of Creole and Cajun Louisiana, offering a controversial exploration of the constraints placed on women's individuality and sexual-ity in the process. Twain, Chesnutt, and Chopin, like all of the writers featured in Unit 8, were committed to providing realistic representations of their local cultures and to constructing complicated, believable characters who faced complex moral dilemmas about the nature of their American identities.

Video Overview

- **Authors covered:** Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), Charles W. Chesnutt, Kate Chopin
- **Who's interviewed:** Jocelyn Chadwick, associate professor of education (Harvard University); Emory Elliott, professor of English (University of California, Riverside); Bruce Michelson, professor of English (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign); Nell Irvin Painter, professor of American history (Princeton University)
- **Points covered:**
 - Introduction to the emergence of new, realistic sounding voices in American literature after the Civil War. Writers who represented regions, classes, and races that had not traditionally been given a voice in American literature demanded representation in the popular imagination and the right to satirize and criticize America in new ways. The American South was an important site for the formation of the literary movement, often called "regional realism."
 - Samuel Clemens—better known as Mark Twain—transformed American literature with his skilled representation of regional dialect and his willingness to confront Americans with the difficult issues of racial and class inequality. Favoring the real over the fantastic or the romantic, Twain could make readers uncomfortable with his unsparing representations of the often unpleasant reality of the human condition. At the same time, his satiric portraits of American life often charm readers with their humor and comedy. His masterpiece, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, continues to create controversy for its vivid evocation of racial tensions.
 - Charles W. Chesnutt, a writer of mixed African American and white descent, created psychologically complex characters and representations of vernacular speech to challenge American stereotypes about race. His stories are often preoccupied with the problems

Video Overview (continued)

faced by people of mixed blood who lived on what he called “the color line” between black and white society.

- Kate Chopin set her stories and novels within the distinctive culture of Louisiana Creole and Cajun society. Exploring the frustration of women bound by restrictive social conventions, her work is feminist in its implications. Chopin’s frank depictions of both female sexual passion and discontent within marriage made her work extremely controversial in her own time.
- These southern practitioners of regional realism rejected idealistic romanticism in order to bear accurate witness to the reality of the world around them. In the process, they created complex characters faced with challenging moral dilemmas. Their work opened up new voices and new insights that democratized American literature and transformed national conceptions of what it means to be American.

PREVIEW

- **Preview the video:** American culture was changing rapidly in the post–Civil War era: new technologies such as the telegraph and the railroad bound the continent together, postwar racial tensions brought the issue of the “color line” to the forefront of American consciousness, and a new commitment to realistic representation transformed literary style. Writers responded to these cultural developments by producing texts that paid close attention to the specifics of people and place in particular regions of the country, evoking the distinctive culture of areas of America that had not been previously represented. The South was an important site for the development of this movement, often called “regional realism.” Mark Twain used realism and regional dialect in his masterpiece, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to challenge readers to

come to new conclusions about the role of race and class in America. His complex evocation of racial tension continues to inspire controversy. Charles W. Chesnutt adopted the regional realist style to explore the contradictions of life on the “color line” between black and white society and to challenge racial stereotypes. Kate Chopin depicted the exotic culture of Creole and Cajun Louisiana, offering a controversial exploration of the constraints placed on women’s individuality and sexuality in the process. All of these writers were committed to providing realistic representations of their local cultures and to constructing complicated, believable characters who faced complex moral dilemmas about the nature of their American identities.

- **What to think about while watching:** How do these authors challenge Americans to grapple with difficult issues regarding social class, region, and race? How do these writers react against romantic conventions to create a new aesthetic in American literature? Why is the realistic representation of dialect so important in late-nineteenth-century American literature? How do these depictions of regional life expand traditional ideas about American identity? How did the regional realist movement impact subsequent American fiction?
- **Tying the video to the unit content:** Unit 8 expands on the issues outlined in the video to further explore the scope and impact of regional realism on American literature and culture in areas outside of the South. The curriculum materials offer background on Native American, African American, and European American writers who represent the language, customs, and cultures of New England, California, and the midwestern plains. The unit offers contextual background to expand on the video’s introduction to the political issues, historical events, and literary styles that shaped these realistic depictions of life in regional America.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE VIDEO			
	How do place and time shape the authors' works and our understanding of them?	What is an American? How does American literature create conceptions of the American experience and identity?	What characteristics of a literary work have made it influential over time?
Compre- hension Questions	What political and social problems faced the American South in the period after the Civil War known as Reconstruction?	What is the "plantation myth"? How do the featured southern regionalist writers challenge and transform ideas about life in the American South?	What is dialect? How did post-Civil War writers represent vernacular speech?
Context Questions	What role does the Mississippi River play in Mark Twain's depiction of Huck and Jim's journey southward in <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> ? What are the implications of the fact that they continue to drift further and further south over the course of their adventure? How do Twain's depictions of the culture of the border state of Missouri compare to Chopin's representations of life in the Deep South in Louisiana?	What is the difference between Chopin's portrait of mixed-race people in "Désirée's Baby" and Chesnutt's representations of mixed-race people in Cincinnati in "The Wife of His Youth"? What different attitudes and assumptions about race do these writers bring to their texts?	How does Twain's characterization of African Americans compare to Chesnutt's characterization of African Americans? How do both authors challenge and participate in racial stereotypes? How did their depictions of African American speech and culture influence later African American writers?
Exploratory Questions	Why did the accurate representation of dialect play such an important role in regional realism? How did these writers' innovations in the creation of realistic-sounding dialogue affect later American literature?	What made Twain's <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> and Chopin's <i>The Awakening</i> such controversial novels, both in their own time and in ours? How did their representations of southern culture unsettle assumptions and cause discomfort in their readers? How does their work continue to challenge readers?	Ernest Hemingway claimed that all subsequent American literature derived from <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> . What did Hemingway mean by this claim? Why did he see Twain's novel as so foundational to American identity and to American literary traditions?

TIMELINE

	Texts	Contexts
1860s	<p>Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), <i>The Innocents Abroad</i> (1869)</p> <p>Bret Harte, "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Plain Language from Truthful James" (1869)</p>	<p>United States Secret Service established (1860)</p> <p>Transcontinental telegraph service established between New York and San Francisco (1861)</p> <p>Civil War (1861–65)</p> <p>Homestead Act (1862)</p> <p>Emancipation Act (1863)</p> <p>President Abraham Lincoln assassinated (1865)</p> <p>Ku Klux Klan formed (1866)</p> <p>First elevated railroad begins service in New York City (1867)</p>
1870s	<p>Bret Harte, <i>"The Luck of Roaring Camp" and Other Sketches</i> (1870)</p> <p>Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> (1876)</p> <p>Sarah Orne Jewett, <i>Deephaven</i> (1877)</p>	<p>Fire destroys large portions of Chicago (1871)</p> <p>Yellowstone National Park established (1872)</p> <p>Battle of Little Bighorn (Custer's Last Stand) (1876)</p> <p>Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone (1876)</p> <p>Edison patents the phonograph (1878)</p>
1880s	<p>Joel Chandler Harris, "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story," "Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox," <i>Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings</i> (1881)</p> <p>Sarah Orne Jewett, <i>The White Heron</i> (1886)</p> <p>Charles W. Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine" (1887)</p> <p>Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), <i>The Prince and the Pauper</i> (1882), <i>Life on the Mississippi</i> (1883), <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> (1885), <i>A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court</i> (1889)</p>	<p>President James Garfield assassinated (1881)</p> <p>American Red Cross founded (1881)</p> <p>Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)</p> <p>American Federation of Labor launched (1886)</p> <p>Coca-Cola invented (1886)</p>
1890s	<p>Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, "The Revolt of 'Mother,' " "A New England Nun" (1891)</p> <p>Kate Chopin, "At the 'Cadian Ball" (1892), "Désirée's Baby," <i>At Fault</i> (1893), <i>Bayou Folk</i> (1894), <i>A Night in Acadie</i> (1897), <i>The Awakening</i> (1899)</p> <p>Sarah Orne Jewett, <i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i> (1896)</p> <p>Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), <i>Following the Equator</i> (1897)</p> <p>Charles W. Chesnutt, <i>The Conjure Woman</i>, "The Wife of His Youth" and <i>Other Stories of the Color Line</i> (1899)</p>	<p>Massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota (1890)</p> <p>Daughters of the American Revolution founded (1890)</p> <p>Pan-American Union formed (1890)</p> <p>National American Woman Suffrage Association founded (1890)</p> <p>Immigration Center established on Ellis Island (1892)</p> <p>World Columbian Exposition, Chicago (1893)</p> <p>Hawaii becomes a U.S. Protectorate (1893)</p> <p>Klondike Gold Rush (1896)</p> <p>Spanish-American War (1898)</p>

TIMELINE (continued)

	Texts	Contexts
1900s	<p>Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Foreigner" (1900)</p> <p>Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" (1900)</p> <p>Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), <i>Indian Boyhood</i> (1902)</p> <p>Alexander Posey, letters of Fus Fixico (1902–08), "Hotgun on the Death of Yadeka Harjo" (1908)</p>	<p>President William McKinley assassinated (1901)</p> <p>Orville and Wilbur Wright achieve first powered flight, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina (1903)</p> <p>International Workers of the World union founded (1905)</p> <p>First radio broadcast (1906)</p> <p>Ford Model T goes into production (1908)</p>
1910s	<p>Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), <i>The Soul of an Indian</i> (1911), <i>The Indian Today</i> (1915), <i>From the Deep Woods to Civilization</i> (1916)</p>	<p>First movie studio opens in Hollywood (1911)</p> <p>World War I begins in Europe (1914)</p> <p>Panama Canal opens (1914)</p> <p>D. W. Griffith's <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (1915)</p> <p>United States enters World War I (1917)</p> <p>18th Amendment to the Constitution (Prohibition) (1919)</p>

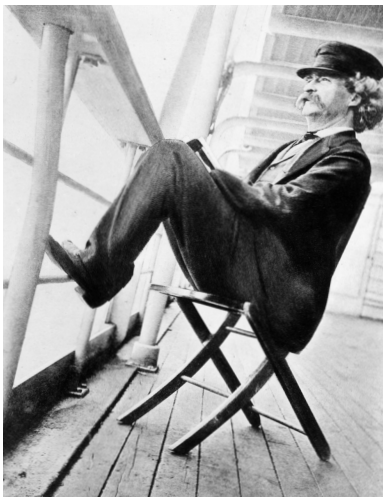
AUTHOR/TEXT REVIEW

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) (1835–1910)

Samuel L. Clemens, better known by his pen name “Mark Twain,” continues to enjoy a reputation, already attained by the end of his lifetime, as an icon of American literature. As such, he and his most enduringly popular novel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, have been subjects of high praise and, at times, subjects of probing questions about the cultural assumptions that shape definitions of “literature” and of “American-ness” at different historical moments. Indeed, Twain’s fame stems in large part from his ability to raise questions about American identity and values in humorous ways through his writings, though they are often tinged with bitterness and despair.

Twain’s life provided subjects and sources for many of his works. Born in Missouri, he grew up in the Mississippi river town of Hannibal, which, thinly disguised as St. Petersburg, became the boyhood home of his most famous characters, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Clemens himself did not enjoy a long childhood. Following the death of his father, he left school at age twelve and worked for the next several years as a printer’s apprentice to help support his mother and four siblings. During this time, he also began to try his hand at writing. In 1853 he embarked on a three-year period of travel as a journeyman printer, which took him through the Midwest and as far east as New York. This adventure was succeeded by an apprenticeship and subsequent job as a riverboat pilot, an exciting and lucrative experience that he would later recount in his 1883 memoir *Life on the Mississippi*. When the beginning of the Civil War ended Mississippi riverboat commerce in 1861, Twain enlisted for a brief period in the Confederate militia and then spent the next several years wandering through the West. He entered into a number of failed get-rich-quick schemes with his brother in the Nevada Territory (the subject of his 1872 memoir *Roughing It*) and published satirical sketches for western newspapers, first as an occasional contributor and then as a popular regular reporter and correspondent. In these pieces, he developed his skilled ear for **dialect**, establishing what would become his trademark humorous style of capturing the particularities of time, place, and personality by merely seeming to report what characters say in their own words, however unpopular or crude the sentiments. Following the convention of the age, these pieces appeared anonymously or under a pseudonym, for which Clemens chose “Mark Twain,” the river pilot’s term for a safe depth for passage.

Though Twain satirized genteel convention and corruption in print, he aspired to higher social status, vast riches, and greater fame for himself. He established his reputation in 1869 with the publication of *The Innocents Abroad*, a popular book about his experiences on the first large-scale American tourist excursion to Europe after the Civil War. Soon thereafter, in 1870, he married Olivia Langdon, the daughter of a wealthy coal merchant, and moved first to Buffalo and then into a fashionable mansion in Hartford, Connecticut, where his life began to assume the trappings of gentility. During the 1870s



[3777] Anonymous, *Mark Twain, Captain* (1895), courtesy of the Mark Twain House, Hartford, CT.

and 1880s, Twain began producing the novels for which he is best remembered today, including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), a simultaneously anti-sentimental and nostalgic tale of Missouri boyhood; *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), a popular historical romance; *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), a social and political burlesque in the form of a parody of the historical novel; and, most notably, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). *Huckleberry Finn*, his greatest work, is remarkable above all for conjuring up a vivid sense of a time and place, for using humor and pathos to pose crucial questions about race relations and the legacy of slavery, and for experimenting with narration and dialect. Through the naïve perspective of Huck, a first-person boy narrator who speaks in slang and dialect, Twain exposes social inhibitions and injustices, the gaps between what the American people are supposed to be and what they are.

Twain's literary output dropped off in the remaining two decades of his life, during which time he lived abroad with his family for substantial periods. Those works that he did produce, such as *Following the Equator* (1897), a memoir of a trip around the world, reflect a new concern with global affairs, as well as an increasingly caustic and pessimistic tone. Nonetheless, during the final years of his life, he found himself celebrated everywhere, attaining fame at home and abroad as a kind of living literary institution and firmly securing a place for himself in the history of American letters.

TEACHING TIPS

■ Twain wrote the first sixteen chapters of *Huckleberry Finn* in the Centennial year 1876. He then found himself frustrated and uncertain about how to finish the story, abandoning it until 1883. Ask students to think about the relevance of the fact that this novel was begun on the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. How does the book comment on the Declaration's ideals of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"? Ask your class to think about the breaking point at Chapter 16, given the information that Twain left his draft at that point for eight years. Why might he have found himself frustrated and uncertain about the trajectory of the story at that point? How did he resolve his problem? How does Huck and Jim's relationship change during the Grangerford and Shepherdson sequence?

■ Twain's repeated use of the word "nigger" throughout *Huckleberry Finn* has caused controversy since its publication and can make it a troubling book to teach. Parents and administrators angry about what they perceive as the book's racism have called for its removal from middle school and high school curricula. Ask your students to think about why Twain used this pejorative term—and it was considered pejorative both in his own time and in the historical period in which the novel is set—in a novel that many readers have understood to be an indictment of racism. What effect might Twain have been aiming for? Should we understand his use of the word as itself an example of racism? Is there a distinction to be made between Twain's

TWAIN WEB ARCHIVE

[3631] Edward Windsor Kemble, *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-98767]. Shown with a shotgun and a rabbit, Huck Finn epitomizes the all-American traits of self-sufficiency and independence in this frontispiece illustration for the 1885 edition of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Tom Sawyer's Comrade).

[3777] Anonymous, *Mark Twain, Captain* (1895), courtesy of the Mark Twain House, Hartford, CT. A riverboat pilot in his youth, Samuel L. Clemens chose the pseudonym "Mark Twain," a term meaning safe depth for passage. He used realism and regional dialect in his writing to challenge readers to come to new conclusions about the roles of race and class in America.

[4049] Anonymous, *Samuel L. Clemens about the time he wrote Huckleberry Finn* (c. 1885), courtesy of the Mark Twain House, Hartford, CT. During the 1870s and 1880s Twain began producing his best-known novels, including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885).

[4053] Anonymous, *Mark Twain in front of boyhood home, Hannibal, Missouri* (1902), courtesy of the Mark Twain House, Hartford, CT. Born in Missouri, Samuel L. Clemens grew up in the Mississippi river town of Hannibal, which, thinly disguised as St. Petersburg, became the boyhood home of Twain's most famous characters, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

[5831] Anonymous, *Young Sam Clemens [Mark Twain]* (n.d.), courtesy of the Mark Twain House, Hartford, CT. This early photograph of Samuel L. Clemens reflects many of the ideals of realism, including the desire to document uncompromising, literal representations of the material world and the human condition.

[7838] Jocelyn Chadwick, Interview: "Controversy in the Reception of Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*" (2001), courtesy of Annenberg Media and *American Passages*. Jocelyn Chadwick, assistant professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, speaks on the controversial aspects of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.

[7854] Bruce Michelson, Interview: "Stages of Controversy in *Huckleberry Finn*" (2001), courtesy of Annenberg Media and *American Passages*. Bruce Michelson, professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, speaks about the evolution of the controversy surrounding Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.

stand on slavery and his stand on racism? What is the impact of the presence of this word on our understanding of the novel today?

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: Why are Huck and Jim on the raft in *Huckleberry Finn*? What life experiences do these two characters have in common? How are they different from one another?

Context: According to Twain, what are James Fenimore Cooper's "literary offenses"? How does Twain's assessment reflect his own commitment to "realism" as an artistic ideal? Is his analysis a fair indictment of Cooper?

Context: How would you describe the narrative structure of *Huckleberry Finn*? Are some episodes in Huck and Jim's journey more important than other episodes? Does the novel have a climax? If so, what do you consider to be the climactic moment?

Context: Unlike Joel Chandler Harris, Charles W. Chesnutt, and Sarah Orne Jewett, Twain narrates the entire action of his novel through Huck's vernacular speech. Why do you think he does not employ an educated, urbane frame narrator like so many other authors who experimented with representing regional dialects? What roles do the frame narrators play in the stories by Harris, Chesnutt, and Jewett?

Exploration: In the past century and a half, many schools and libraries have banned *Huckleberry Finn* or have contemplated banning it. What makes this book so controversial? How might the reasons for Americans' discomfort with the novel have changed over time? How does *Huckleberry Finn* compare to other books that have been banned for one reason or another over the years (*The Catcher in the Rye*, *Lolita*, *Ulysses*, even *Harry Potter*)? For what reasons, if any, should a book be removed from a school's reading list or library?

Exploration: Critics disagree about Twain's portrait of Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*. How does the characterization of Jim participate in common nineteenth-century stereotypes of African Americans? How does Jim compare to some of the African American characters and writers discussed in Unit 7? Are there ways that Jim challenges racist stereotypes?

Bret Harte (1836–1902)

At the height of his career, in the 1860s and 1870s, Bret Harte was one of the most famous and most highly paid American writers. His popular accounts of life in Gold Rush-era California, including short stories such as "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," seized the public imagination and made him an international celebrity. Harte's invention of prototypical "western" characters—the shady prospector, the cynical gambler, the tough cowboy, the prostitute with a heart of gold—created the mythology through which Americans learned to understand the culture of the "Old West."

Combining realistic descriptions of the specific regional characteristics of California life with sentimental plots, Harte hit on a formula that delighted nineteenth-century readers and continues to influence American narratives of the West.

Born in Albany, New York, Francis Bret Harte was tutored at home by his schoolteacher father, Henry Harte. When Henry died in 1845, the family relocated first to New York City and then to San Francisco when Harte's mother married Colonel Andrew Williams, an early mayor of Oakland, California. During his first six years in California, Harte drifted from job to job, working as a teacher, miner, and stage-coach guard for Wells Fargo. He ultimately found his calling as a printer's apprentice, journalist, and editorial assistant at the small newspapers *The Humboldt Times* and *The Northern Californian*. By 1865, Harte had graduated to positions with larger newspapers and magazines of San Francisco, eventually serving as the editor of the weekly *Californian*, where he commissioned pieces from the then-unknown writer Samuel Clemens. In 1868, Harte was hired as the first editor of the literary magazine *Overland Monthly*, a position that catapulted him to national fame when he used the magazine as the venue for his best stories and his popular poem "Plain Language from Truthful James," usually called "The Heathen Chinee."

Recognized as one of the most popular and marketable writers in America after his stint at the *Overland Monthly*, Harte received a deluge of offers of editorial positions and professional opportunities across the country. In 1871 he signed a one-year contract for \$10,000 (a record-breaking salary for a writer at that time) with the *Atlantic Monthly* in Boston. Harte had promised the magazine a minimum of twelve stories and poems, but, distracted by his status as a celebrity, he grew careless about meeting his obligations. When the *Atlantic* refused to renew his contract at the end of the year, Harte found himself suddenly in need of a new source of income. To fill the gap, he began lecturing and writing plays, but his work never again achieved the success or acclaim he had come to expect. He eventually used his connections in the political world to attain diplomatic posts with the consulates in Germany and Scotland, jobs he held until he was relieved of his positions for "inattention to duty" in 1885. He lived out the rest of his life in London, where he became the permanent guest of the wealthy Van de Velde family. Harte remained a prolific writer until his death, publishing a volume of short stories almost yearly. While his fiction was favorably received in Europe, American critics generally dismissed his later work as repetitive, formulaic, and overly sentimental. Although Harte's reputation declined dramatically in the twentieth century, scholars have recently begun to reassess his important contributions to the development of regionalism and the genre of western fiction.

TEACHING TIPS

■ Harte's literary reputation has suffered for what critics have historically understood as his sentimentality and romanticism. Recently,



[3707] Louis Charles McClure, *The Gold Miner* (c. 1890), courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

HARTE WEB ARCHIVE

[1147] Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1861), courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. This painting's title became a popular motto for Manifest Destiny in America after 1850. Portraits of Captain William Clark and Daniel Boone flank a depiction of San Francisco Bay at the bottom of the image.

[1181] Albert Bierstadt, *Valley of the Yosemite* (1864), courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission. © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Martha C. Karolik for the M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1825–1865, 47.1236. The romantic grandeur and luminism of Bierstadt's western landscapes reflect Hudson River School influences. Realist writers like Bret Harte sought to imbue the same landscapes with the gritty realities of frontier life.

[3707] Louis Charles McClure, *The Gold Miner* (c. 1890), courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection. The discovery of gold and silver in the American West drew fortune seekers from all over the world. Miners often served as the vanguard of American expansion.

[5228] Anonymous, *Montgomery Street, San Francisco, 1852*, courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-55762]. Rapid, mainly white immigration during the Gold Rush brought California to statehood in 1850 as a "free state" that forbade slavery. Yet demand for land and forced labor caused a genocidal-scale population decline among California Indians.

[5824] "Harte's Poems" (1871), courtesy of the Cornell University Making of America Digital Collection. This January 1871 review of Bret Harte's *Poems* reflects the way Harte's work helped shape notions of American manhood.

[5841] Currier and Ives, *Gold Mining in California* (c. 1871), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC2-1755]. This lithograph presents a romantic and sanitized portrayal of life in the gold fields.

however, some literary scholars have claimed that Harte has been misunderstood and that his stories are much more cynical and ironic than has been appreciated. Ask students to think about whether they would characterize "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" as an example of sentimentality (you might refer back to Unit 7 for a discussion of sentimentality) or as participating in a more clearly realist tradition. How ironic is the tone of Harte's narration in this story? What is the relationship between irony and realism?

■ Have your students write articles for the Poker Flat newspaper in which they report on the fate of the "outcasts" from the perspective of a Poker Flat inhabitant.

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: Who are the central characters in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat"? How do they construct or participate in stereotypes about characters from the Old West? How do they challenge these stereotypes?

Context: Bret Harte was a mentor to Mark Twain, giving him some of his first writing assignments and, according to Twain, teaching him a great deal about his craft: "He trimmed and schooled me patiently until he changed me from an awkward utterer of coarse grotesqueness to a writer of paragraphs and chapters." Later, however, Twain attacked Harte's work as overly romantic, unbelievable, and repetitive. How is Harte's work similar to Twain's? What ideals and narrative strategies do they share? How are they different?

Exploration: Compare the plot and characters of "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" to the plot and characters of one or more Western movies (*Stagecoach*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *Unforgiven*, or *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, for example). How do subsequent American portraits of the Old West draw from Harte's depictions? What familiar ideas about the Old West seem to start in Harte's work?

Exploration: In the video for Unit 12 you will encounter two more key sentimental scenes in realist fiction: the breast-feeding of the dying man by Rose of Sharon in *The Grapes of Wrath* and the poisoning of Alejo by crop dusters. How do these compare to Mother Shipton's self-sacrifice in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat"? How do you see the relationship between sentimentality and realism?

Joel Chandler Harris (1848–1908)

Most famous for his creation of the black folk figure Uncle Remus, Joel Chandler Harris was also a journalist, humorist, and novelist. Born in rural Georgia to a single mother, Harris suffered poverty and social ostracism in his childhood. Many of his biographers suggest that his early insecurities led to lifelong shyness, which he compensated for by writing humorous stories and playing practical jokes. At thirteen, Harris was taken on as an apprentice typesetter at *The Countryman*, a weekly newspaper run by Joseph Addison Turner on

his large plantation, called Turnwold. There, Harris received training in printing as well as what he later termed “a liberal education,” enjoying the benefits of the extensive Turnwold library and receiving informal instruction from Turner. He also spent a great deal of time learning from the slaves on the Turnwold plantation, absorbing their stories, songs, and myths. Later, Harris drew on these experiences to compose his sketches and stories of African American life.

In 1864, Turnwold was attacked and destroyed by the advancing Union army, and by 1866, with his finances in ruins, Joseph Turner was forced to dismiss his young typesetter and close *The Countryman*. Harris found employment in Georgia cities, working as a typesetter, journalist, humorist, and editor for a variety of newspapers. In the late 1870s Harris began publishing a series of sketches written in African American **dialect** for the *Atlanta Constitution*, eventually using this forum to develop the character of Uncle Remus. A black slave who tells African American legends and folktales to a young white listener, Uncle Remus quickly achieved popularity with readers in the South as well as the North, where Harris’s columns were syndicated in urban newspapers. Admirers praised the “accuracy” and “authenticity” of Harris’s rendering of African American dialect and recounting of traditional African animal fables about trickster characters such as Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox. Building on the popularity of his newspaper columns, Harris published a book-length collection of Uncle Remus stories in 1880, titled *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*. The book sold out three printings in its initial months of publication, and, as late as 1904, Harris reported that it continued to sell four thousand copies yearly. Capitalizing on his success, Harris followed *Songs and Sayings* with several additional collections of Uncle Remus’s animal fables. He also wrote local-color stories and novels focusing mainly on life among southern blacks and impoverished whites, but these works never attained the success and popularity of the Remus stories.

Harris also continued to work as a journalist until 1902, becoming a self-styled champion of reconciliation between the North and the South and between blacks and whites. In some respects, his ideas about race were enlightened for his time: Harris was a proponent of black education and argued that individuals should be judged according to their personal qualities rather than their race. At the same time, however, he perpetuated racial stereotypes in his writings. Literary critics have frequently pointed out the latent racism of the Uncle Remus tales, especially Harris’s stereotyped portrait of Remus himself as a “contented darky” with nothing but happy memories of his life as a plantation slave. On the other hand, the **trickster** tales that Uncle Remus narrates—with their subversive focus on the triumph of seemingly weak



[1207] George Harper Houghton, *Family of slaves at the Gaines’ house* (1861), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC4-4575].



[2621] Robertson, Seibert & Shearman, *Oh Carry Me Back to Ole Virginnny* (c. 1859), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC4-2356].

HARRIS WEB ARCHIVE

[1207] George Harper Houghton, *Family of slaves at the Gaines' house* (1861), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC4-4575]. Plans like the *Design for \$600 Cottage*, featured in the archive **[3609]**, reveal that a parlor was perceived as necessary in even the most humble home; yet for many slaves merely having a large-enough home on the plantation on which they worked proved problematic.

[2621] Robertson, Seibert & Shearman, *Oh Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny* (c. 1859), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC4-2356]. The image on this tobacco package label is based on a detail from Eastman Johnson's painting *Negro Life at the South* (also called *Old Kentucky Home*). Images of happy slaves belied the true working and living conditions faced by slaves in the antebellum South.

[5360] Frances Benjamin Johnston, *Joel Chandler Harris* (c. 1890–1910), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-103981]. After writing *Uncle Remus and His Friends*, Joel Chandler Harris continued to work as a journalist until 1902, becoming a self-styled champion of reconciliation between the North and the South and between blacks and whites. In some respects, his ideas about race were enlightened for his time: Harris was a proponent of black education and the fair judgment of people regardless of skin color.

[5735] A. B. Frost, *Brer B'ar Tied Hard en Fas* (1892), courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Co. Illustration of Brer Rabbit tying Brer B'ar to a tree, taken from Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus and His Friends: Old Plantation Stories, Songs, and Ballads with Sketches of Negro Characters*. As trickster tales, the African American fables published by Harris contain a subtle critique of oppression.

characters over their aggressors—are characterized by poetic irony and a subtle critique of oppression and prejudice (a critique that Harris may never have fully appreciated). Whatever his intentions, Harris's work is undeniably important as a record of traditional African American folktales that might otherwise have been lost to history.

TEACHING TIPS

■ Students will probably have difficulty with Harris's rendering of Uncle Remus's dialect at first, but you should make it clear that such problems are to be expected and that the tales demand thorough and careful reading. It might be worthwhile to provide a gloss on a few of the more frequently used terms, such as “de” for “the,” “gwyne” for “going,” and “sezee” for “he says.” You might ask them to compare a page of Harris's dialect to a page of Mark Twain's. When Twain writes in dialect, portraying the speech of Jim, what are the differences in strategy? Which works better for a modern reader? After students have become more comfortable reading Harris's and Twain's representation of African American speech, ask them to think about why these renditions of southern black dialect might have been so popular with white northern audiences in the late nineteenth century.

■ Harris always insisted that he did not invent the Uncle Remus tales but instead simply recorded the legends and stories he collected from African Americans. Although he obviously filtered and edited the tales, he would not publish any story that he could not authenticate as part of traditional black folklore. He even claimed that the central character of Uncle Remus “was not an invention of my own, but a human syndicate, three or four old darkies I had known. I just walloped them together into one person and called him Uncle Remus.” After providing students with this background information, ask them to consider the implications of Harris's claims. How does his status as a recorder of folklore change our understanding of him as a writer? Should we read the Remus tales as faithful transcriptions of the stories as their black authors orally constructed them? To what extent might Harris have changed the stories in the act of recording them? Should we understand Uncle Remus as an “authentic” portrait of the African Americans Harris knew? Why might Harris have been invested in claiming this kind of accuracy and authenticity for his work?

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: Which animals are weak and which are strong in the Uncle Remus stories? How does Brer Rabbit succeed in reversing traditional power relations in his encounters with supposedly stronger animals? What qualities enable Brer Rabbit's success?

Comprehension: Examine the frame narratives surrounding the animal fables (in a story that describes the conditions of its own

HALLMARKS OF BLACK ENGLISH

Black English	Examples	Sentences to have students transcribe in Standard English
Predominantly active sentences with a reiteration of the subject	Brer Rabbit say he can't walk. Brer Fox say he tote 'im. Brer Rabbit say how? Brer Fox say in his arms.	Brer Rabbit come prancin' 'long twel he spy de Tar-Baby, en den he fotch up on his behime legs like he wuz 'stonished. De Tar-Baby, she sot dar, she did, en Brer Fox, he lay low.
Use of plural -s in addition to other plural markers	mens	Den one er de chilluns runned away fum de quarters one day, en died de nex' week.
Verb "to be": "is" and "are" exchanged or linking verb "to be" omitted altogether. Use of "ain't" for "isn't" or "aren't"	Is you deaf? W'at you doin' dar? Tar-Baby ain't sayin' nothin'.	"Youer stuck up, dat's w'at you is," says Brer Rabbit.
Tense indicated by context rather than verb endings ("ed" or "s" dropped)	Some say Jedge B'ar come 'long en loosed 'im.	Brer Rabbit say he can't walk. Brer Fox say he tote 'im. Brer Rabbit say how? Brer Fox say in his arms.
"th" is replaced by "t" or "d"	How you come on, den ?	W'at you doin' dar, Settin' in de cornder Smokin' yo' seegyar?
"ng" is replaced by "n" at the end of words	I hear Miss Sally callin' .	Tu'n me loose, fo' I kick de natal stuffin' outen you.
Geneva Smitherman identifies different meanings for the term "nigger": 1. affection or endearment; 2. culturally Black, identifying with and sharing the values of Black people, as opposed to "African American," which has a more middle-class connotation; 3. expression of disapproval for a person's actions; 4. identifying Black folks—period	Now ef dey's an'thing a nigger lub, nex' ter 'possum, en chik'n, en watermillyums, it's scuppernon's.	I wouldn't spec' fer you ter b'lieve me 'less you know all 'bout de fac's. But ef you en young miss dere doan' min' list'n'in' ter a ole nigger run on a minute er two while you er restin', I kin 'splain to yer how it all happen.
<p>Sources:</p> <p>Mike Daley, "Black English and Rap Music," York University (May 14, 1998) <www.finearts.yorku.ca/mdaley/blackenglish.html>.</p> <p>Geneva Smitherman, <i>Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner</i> (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994).</p>		

telling, the portion that sets up the “story within the story” is called the frame narrative). How is Uncle Remus portrayed? What is his relationship to the boy and the boy’s family? How does Uncle Remus assert control over the stories and authority over the boy on occasion?

Context: Compare Harris’s representation of Uncle Remus and his trickster stories to Charles Chesnutt’s Uncle Julius in “The Goophered Grapevine.” How are these portraits of African American storytellers different from one another? How do the trickster tales narrated by each of the “Uncles” compare? How do Chesnutt’s accounts of Uncle Julius’s history and motives complicate our understanding of “The Goophered Grapevine”?

Exploration: Stories about Brer Rabbit and his fellow animals have continued to entertain American readers—adults and children alike—through the twentieth century. Books featuring Uncle Remus have continued to sell well, and in 1946 Disney produced *Song of the South*, an animated feature film about the characters that populate the Uncle Remus stories (despite criticisms of the film’s racial insensitivity, Disney re-released *Song of the South* as recently as 1986). Why do you think these stories and images have remained so popular? How might their significance to white and black audiences have changed over time?

Sarah Orne Jewett (1849–1909)

Sarah Orne Jewett’s evocative sketches of village life in nineteenth-century Maine have earned her a place among the most important practitioners of American regional writing. Born in South Berwick, Maine, Jewett grew up steeped in the idioms and atmosphere of coastal New England. Her early experiences accompanying her father, a rural doctor, on house calls provided her with insight into the daily lives of the people who would eventually populate her fiction. Jewett’s father encouraged her writing aspirations and instilled in her his taste for realistic description and restrained narration—qualities that characterized Jewett’s best work.

As early as her teens, Jewett began writing and publishing fiction and poetry, placing one of her stories in the influential literary magazine the *Atlantic Monthly*. In 1877 she published *Deephaven*, her first book-length collection, and followed up on its success with several other collections of stories, four novels, and some children’s literature. While Jewett’s novels were well received, critics generally agree that her short fiction represents her most important literary accomplishment. In *The White Heron* (a collection of stories published in 1886) and especially in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896), Jewett employed the flexible narrative structure of the “sketch” and the short story to create sensitive, realistic depictions of specific characters, customs, and places. The genre of the sketch—less formal than a novel and less dependent on traditional conventions of plotting and structure—enabled her to experiment with narrative form to compelling effect. Her masterpiece, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, is a loosely



[9066] Joseph John Kirkbride, *Panorama of Moosriver Village* (c. 1884–91), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-61485].

linked collection of sketches unified by its narrator, a somewhat detached, cultured summer visitor to rural Maine.

Beginning in the late 1870s, Jewett found support and inspiration from an influential circle of New England women writers and artists. Her most important bond was with Annie Fields, the wife of prominent publisher James T. Fields. After her husband's death, Annie Fields began an intense, exclusive relationship with Jewett that endured until Jewett's death. In the nineteenth century, this kind of long-term union between two women who lived together was referred to as a **Boston marriage**. The two women regularly traveled together and spent much of every year living together in Fields's homes in Boston and on the New England shore. In recent years, literary critics and historians have become very interested in the nature of Jewett's and Fields's deep commitment to one another. While the question of whether or not their relationship was a sexual one has never been resolved, it is clear that the two women drew companionship and support from their mutual bond.

In 1901, Jewett received an honorary doctorate from Bowdoin College, her father's alma mater. The next year, she was seriously hurt in a carriage accident, sustaining injuries to her head and spine that left her unable to write. Eight years later she died in South Berwick, in the home in which she was born.



[5274] Arnold Genthe, *Sarah Orne Jewett* (n.d.), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Arnold Genthe Collection [LC-G4085-0430].

TEACHING TIPS

■ Sarah Orne Jewett had a deep interest in the occult, a theme that arises in “The Foreigner.” Ask students to think about the role of the “other-worldly” in this story. Why does Jewett include the ending she does? How does it affect Mrs. Todd? How does it affect the narrator? How does the occult event serve to bind together women in the story? What is the relationship between Jewett's commitment to realistic depiction and her interest in the occult? Refer students to the contextual material featured in “The Spirit Is Willing: The Occult and Women in the Nineteenth Century” in Unit 6. Ask them to think about how this story relates to the experiences of the Fox sisters.

■ Jewett once told an editor who urged her to write a novel that she did not think she was capable of managing the narrative structure of a long work: “But I don't believe I could write a long story as you . . . advise me in this last letter. The story would have no plot. I could write you entertaining letters perhaps, from some desirable house where I was in most charming company, but I couldn't make a story about it.” After you give students this background information, ask them how fair Jewett's self-deprecating analysis is to her ability to structure narrative. How do her stories challenge conventional plot structures? Do her plots move in a linear fashion? How does information come out? How are characters developed? How does she use the short story to experiment with narrative form?

[1546] *Harper's Weekly*, Eight illustrations depicting a New England farmhouse (1876), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-102852]. These illustrations depict a replica New England farmhouse that was exhibited at the Centennial Exposition of 1876.

[4440] Allen L. Hubbard, *Alna Meeting House, State Rt. 218, Alna, Lincoln County, Maine* (1936), courtesy of the Library of Congress. This plain-style meetinghouse reflects the old New England emphasis on spiritual rather than material wealth. Meetinghouses were places of worship and the site of town meetings.

[5274] Arnold Genthe, *Sarah Orne Jewett* (n.d.), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Arnold Genthe Collection [LC-G4085-0430]. Born in 1849 in South Berwick, Maine, Sarah Orne Jewett grew up steeped in the idioms and atmosphere of coastal New England. Her evocative sketches of village life in nineteenth-century Maine have earned her a place among the most important practitioners of American regional writing.

[7111] Samuel H. Gottscho, *Gate bordered by stone walls* (c. 1918), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC2-4334]. Photograph of a rural New England setting such as those found in Jewett's work.

[9066] Joseph John Kirkbride, *Panorama of Mooseriver Village* (c. 1884–91), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-61485]. Sarah Orne Jewett, the daughter of a country doctor, drew much of her inspiration from the small-town New England life with which she was intimately familiar.

Comprehension: In the story “The White Heron,” how does Sylvia relate to her rural environment and to the animals—both wild and domestic—that she encounters within it? How is her relationship to wildlife different from the ornithologist's? Why does she ultimately decide not to tell him about the white heron?

Comprehension: “The Foreigner” tells the story of Mrs. Tolland, a foreign woman brought to Maine by her sea captain husband. When he dies at sea, she is left alone, living in the captain's house, in a community that continues to treat her as an outsider. What kinds of relationships do the characters in “The Foreigner” have to the objects in the Tollands' house? What objects are important to Mrs. Tolland? How does Mrs. Todd feel about the house? What attitude does Uncle Lorenzo take toward the house and its contents?

Context: “The Foreigner” contains numerous frames and distancing devices: the narrator recounts Mrs. Todd's story, while Mrs. Todd recounts both events that happened to her directly and events that she heard about from other people or through hearsay and gossip. What is the effect of this multiplicity of frames around the tale of Mrs. Tolland and her life and death? What links the various layers of the story together? Why do you think so many authors who wrote in the realist genre and experimented with dialect relied on frame narratives (Harris and Chesnutt, for example)?

Exploration: How do Jewett's depictions of New England characters and their values compare to other, earlier authors' interest in the same subject matter (Nathaniel Hawthorne, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, or Harriet Beecher Stowe, for example)?

Kate Chopin (1851–1904)

Writing at the end of the nineteenth century at the height of the popularity of “local color” fiction, Kate Chopin introduced American readers to a new fictional setting with her evocations of the diverse culture of Cajun and Creole Louisiana. But while much of Chopin's work falls into the category of **regionalism**, her stories and especially her novel, *The Awakening*, are also notable for their introduction of controversial subjects like women's sexuality, divorce, extramarital sex, and miscegenation.

Kate Chopin was born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a socially prominent, financially secure family. Her mother, Eliza Faris, descended from French Creole ancestors, and her father, Thomas O'Flaherty, was an Irish immigrant who had made his fortune as a merchant in St. Louis. Chopin learned to speak both French and English in her home and was sent to Catholic school. At the age of nineteen she married Oscar Chopin, a French Creole from a Louisiana planter family. After a glamorous European honeymoon, the couple settled in New Orleans, where Oscar went into business as a cotton broker and Kate became active in the city's social life. Her fluency in French and southern sympathies ensured that she fit easily into New Orleans society.

When the cotton brokerage business failed in 1879, the Chopins

relocated to Natchitoches Parish in rural Louisiana, where they intended to operate one of Oscar's father's cotton plantations. But by 1883 Oscar Chopin had died of swamp fever, leaving Kate Chopin a thirty-two-year-old widow with six children to support and limited financial resources. After running the plantation on her own for a year, Chopin returned to St. Louis, where she moved into her mother's house and began writing poetry and short stories. Drawing on her experiences in New Orleans and Natchitoches, Chopin created realistic depictions of the distinctive customs of the region and captured the cadences and diction of Louisiana speech in her dialogue. By 1893, she had published her first novel, *At Fault*, and placed stories in such prestigious venues as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Vogue*, and *Century*. In 1894 she published an extremely successful collection of short stories, *Bayou Folk*, and followed it up with another volume of stories about Louisiana entitled *A Night in Acadie*.

While her stories have been praised and frequently anthologized since their publication in the 1890s, critics today generally agree that Chopin's masterpiece is her 1899 novel, *The Awakening*. Taking up Chopin's recurring theme of the conflict between social constraints placed on women and their desire for independence, the novel tells the story of Edna Pontellier, a Creole woman who gradually awakens to her own dissatisfaction with her identity as a wife and mother. Focusing on her own needs and desires, Edna daringly flouts social conventions by moving out of her husband's house and entering into an adulterous affair. Due to its controversial subject matter and its sympathetic portrayal of its unconventional heroine, the novel provoked hostile reviews from critics who dismissed it as "trite and sordid" or even "perverse" and "vulgar." While Chopin did not completely abandon her writing career in the wake of *The Awakening*'s harsh reception, she was upset by the criticism and her literary output diminished. She died five years later of a cerebral hemorrhage. *The Awakening* sold poorly in its own day and was largely ignored until the mid-twentieth century, when it was recognized as a masterpiece of feminist and realist literature.

TEACHING TIPS

■ Kate Chopin habitually wrote her stories and novels while sitting in the living room, surrounded by the noise of her busy household and subject to the demands of her six children. She wrote only one or two days a week and composed most of her stories in a single sitting without revision. She said of her own writing, "I am completely at the mercy of unconscious selection. To such an extent is this true, that what is called the polishing up process has always proved disastrous to my work, and I avoid it, preferring the integrity of crudities to artificialities." Ask students to consider what kinds of aesthetic values underwrite this description of a writer at work. Why was Chopin invested in presenting herself as someone who never revised? Why might she assume that readers would appreciate "crudities" over "artificialities"?



[2582] Thomas Anshutz, *A Rose* (1907), courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Marguerite and Frank Cosgrove, Jr. Fund, 1993 (1993.324). Photograph © 1994 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

CHOPIN WEB ARCHIVE

[2576] William Merritt Chase, *At the Seaside* (1892), courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Kate Chopin evokes the symbolic landscape of the sea at the end of *The Awakening*. Chopin's protagonist finds considerable oppression in the forced camaraderie of female socialization, but a freeing independence in the solitary ocean.

[2582] Thomas Anshutz, *A Rose* (1907), courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Marguerite and Frank A. Cosgrove, Jr. Fund, 1993 (1993.324). Photograph © 1994 The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Anshutz, a student of painter Thomas Eakins, was known for his unconventional subject matter, but here he uses his photographic clarity to make a fashionable portrait. The pose of the sitter reflects the sense that Anshutz has captured an informal, fleeting moment. It is this same attention to the emotional resonances of daily life that fills Chopin's *The Awakening*.

[4101] Anonymous, *Kate Chopin house* (c. 1883), courtesy of Northwestern University. Chopin wrote her stories and novels amidst the hustle and bustle of her living room, frequently interrupted by her six children.

[4106] Anonymous, *Kate Chopin with children* (c. 1878), courtesy of Northwestern University. Photograph of Chopin with four of her six children. Widowed at thirty-two, Chopin wrote poetry, stories, and novels to support her family.

[6094] Anonymous, *Frances Benjamin Johnston, full-length portrait, standing at edge of ocean in bathing suit, with left hand on boat, facing right* (1880), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-120445]. Bathing was a popular fin de siècle pursuit, whether in the ocean or in mineral springs. Bathing costumes protected women's modesty.

[8521] Kate Chopin, "Désirée's Baby" (1893), courtesy of 4Literature.net. In this story Chopin addresses the question of miscegenation and the legacy of slavery in the South.

■ Chopin's original title for *The Awakening* was "The Solitary Soul." Ask students which title they prefer. Why might Chopin have changed the title? What different ideas does each title suggest about the novel's heroine and about her suicide?

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: How does Edna rebel against social conventions in *The Awakening*? How does her rebellion begin? Which of her actions seem most shocking to her community?

Context: Examine the nineteenth-century designs for bathing costumes and beach dresses featured in the archive. What kinds of attitudes toward women's bodies and women's athletic pursuits do these costumes reveal? How do these images affect your understanding of Edna's decision to swim naked into the Gulf at the end of *The Awakening*?

Context: As its subtitle indicates, the short story "The Storm" functions as a sequel to "At the 'Cadian Ball,'" offering a glimpse of the characters' lives several years after the action of the first story. How do the events of "The Storm" complicate the resolution of "At the 'Cadian Ball'"? How are we meant to understand the final line, "So the storm passed and every one was happy"? Why do you think Chopin never submitted this story for publication?

Exploration: Literary critics disagree about how to interpret the meaning of Edna's suicide at the end of *The Awakening*. While some take the ending of the novel as an affirmation of Edna's strength and independence, others see it as psychologically out of character for Edna or as the pathetic act of a hopeless, defeated woman. How do you understand the ending of the novel? How does Chopin's representation of suicide resonate with descriptions of suicides or suicide attempts in later feminist American literature (by Dorothy Parker, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, or Susanna Kaysen, for example)? You might refer to Anne Sexton's poem to Sylvia Plath, "Sylvia's Death," in particular.

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1852–1930)

In composing her well-received realist depictions of women's lives in New England villages, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman wrote about the people and places she had known all her life. Born in Randolph, Massachusetts, Freeman grew up in intimate familiarity with the economically depressed circumstances and strict Calvinist belief system that shaped the lives of the majority of her characters. At the age of fifteen, Freeman moved with her family to Brattleboro, Vermont, where her father opened a dry goods store in an effort to better their financial situation. After graduating from Brattleboro high school, Freeman spent one year at Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary but did not enjoy college life or living away from home. Returning to Vermont, she faced a series of misfortunes: her teaching career was unsuccessful, her sister died, her father's business failed, and her mother was forced to sup-

port the family by working as a housekeeper for the town's minister. Her family's poverty was difficult for Freeman to deal with; she found it particularly humiliating that she had to move into the servants' quarters at the home where her mother worked as a domestic.

In 1883, after both of her parents had died, Freeman moved back to Randolph to live with her childhood friend, Mary Wales. There she developed the writing career she had begun a few years earlier with the publication of some stories and poetry for children. She soon found a ready market for her realist representations of New England life, placing stories in the prestigious *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and eventually publishing her own book-length collections of stories. Her work was well received by both critics and readers, who were charmed by her focus on a regional lifestyle that was rapidly becoming extinct. Freeman was a prolific writer: over the course of her career she published fifteen volumes of short stories (the work for which she is best known today), over fifty uncollected stories and essays, fourteen novels, three plays, three volumes of poetry, and eight children's books. With Wales's help, Freeman became a shrewd and successful businessperson. Her surviving letters reveal her deep concern with making a living as an author and with maximizing her fees and royalties.

While Freeman's successful career afforded her financial security and a great deal of autonomy, her best fiction focuses on the plight of women whose lives are bounded by poverty and the social constraints imposed on them by their strict religious beliefs and their position as women. Fascinated by the impact of traditional Puritan values of submissiveness, frugality, and self-denial on New England culture, Freeman often portrayed characters who create obstacles to their own happiness by their strict adherence to Calvinist morality. In other stories, however, she explored the rebellions and triumphs of seemingly meek women, depicting their strategies for gaining and maintaining control over their domestic situations with humor and sensitivity. She provided unflinching portraits of both the difficulties of "spinsterhood" and the often oppressive power dynamics that structured nineteenth-century marriage.

Freeman herself married late in life, wedding Dr. Charles Freeman when she was forty-nine. After an initial period of harmony, the marriage ended in separation when she had her husband institutionalized for alcoholism. In 1926 she was awarded the William Dean Howells Gold Medal for Fiction by the American Academy of Letters, and later that year she was inducted into the prestigious National Institute for Arts and Letters.



[1546] *Harper's Weekly*, Eight illustrations depicting a New England farmhouse, courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-102852].

[1546] *Harper's Weekly*, Eight illustrations depicting a New England farmhouse, courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-102852]. These illustrations show a variety of furnishings from a replica New England farmhouse exhibited at the Centennial Exposition of 1876. Spinning wheels, a desk, a clock, and kitchen implements are among the items shown.

[1895] Jerome Thompson, *Recreation* (1857), courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum Purchase, the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, 47.13. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the outdoors was increasingly associated with relaxation, particularly for those who could afford leisure time and travel. Better roads and growing railroad systems made travel to suburban areas easier for residents of nearby cities.

[4423] Anonymous, *The First Step* [*Godey's Lady's Book*] (June 1858), courtesy of Hope Greenberg, University of Vermont. The parlor was perceived as a necessary room in even the most humble of homes. When there was no room for a formal parlor, Americans made an effort to adorn their living spaces with decorative objects, such as the paintings and bureau-top items in this drawing.

[8194] Bruce Michelson, Interview: "Women's Regionalist Writing" (2001), courtesy of Annenberg Media and *American Passages*. Bruce Michelson, professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, speaks about women's regionalist writing.

■ While "The Revolt of 'Mother'" is one of Freeman's most frequently anthologized stories, she herself was dissatisfied with what she viewed as its lack of realism. In an autobiographical essay she explained, "in the first place all fiction ought to be true, and 'The Revolt of 'Mother'" is not in the least true. . . . There never was in New England a woman like Mother. If there had been she most certainly would not have moved into that palatial barn. . . . New England women of that period coincided with their husbands in thinking that sources of wealth should be better housed than consumers." After you give students this background information, ask them to think about Freeman's literary values: why does she insist that "all fiction ought to be true"? Given her conviction that the events in "The Revolt of 'Mother'" do not meet her realist standards, why did she plot the story around Mother's rebellion? You might ask students to outline what the plot would have looked like had Freeman characterized Mother as a more typical "New England woman of that period," and then have them share their outlines with the class.

■ Recently, scholars of lesbian studies have become interested in Freeman's work and career, examining her long and close relationship with her roommate, Mary Wales; her late and unsuccessful marriage; and her depictions of women who choose solitude or companionship with other women over relationships with men. While close female friendships had been socially acceptable in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, by the time Freeman wrote exclusive female relationships were undergoing redefinition. With the emergence of lesbian identity—and a new understanding of the sexual possibilities of same-sex relationships—close attachments between women were beginning to be portrayed as "unhealthy" or as a symptom of moral or biological degeneracy. Ask students to consider Freeman's portrayal of marriage and heterosexual romance in light of these issues. How does Freeman critique the power structure of heterosexual relationships? How radical is her position? What kinds of alternatives, if any, does she envision for characters involved in unsatisfying heterosexual unions?

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: In "A New England Nun," what kinds of pets does Louisa have? How do their lives symbolically suggest the limits of Louisa's own existence?

Context: Why are Mother and Nancy dissatisfied with their home in "The Revolt of 'Mother'"? What kinds of improvements do they wish for? How do their visions for their new home coincide with contemporary ideas about home decoration and parlor culture?

Context: In both "A New England Nun" and "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" Freeman narrates women's assertion of control over their own domestic situations. What kinds of strategies do Louisa and Mother employ to gain their ends? How empowering are their "revolts"? Should they be characterized as revolts? How do Freeman's depic-

tions of women exercising domestic authority compare with Chopin's portrait of Edna Pontellier's drive for autonomy in *The Awakening*? Do Louisa or Mother experience anything like an "awakening"?

Exploration: Freeman was fascinated by the legacy of Puritanism in New England, explaining that her characters were "the descendants of the Massachusetts Bay Colonists, in whom can still be seen traces of will and conscience, so strong as to be almost exaggerations and deformities, which characterized their ancestors." How do Freeman's characters compare to the Puritans featured in Unit 3 (John Winthrop, Anne Bradstreet, or Mary Rowlandson, for example)? How do the scruples and morals that motivate Freeman's characters' actions resonate with Puritan values?

Charles W. Chesnutt (1858–1932)

Charles W. Chesnutt was a pioneer among African American fiction writers, addressing controversial issues of race in a realist style that commanded the attention and respect of the white literary establishment of the late nineteenth century. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Chesnutt was the son of free parents who had moved north before the Civil War. During Reconstruction, the family returned to North Carolina and Chesnutt was raised among rural African Americans. His family's financial difficulties led him to take a job as a teacher while he was still a teenager. Building on his studious habits and intellectual curiosity, he eventually rose to the position of principal of the Fayetteville State Normal School for Negroes. In 1883, Chesnutt sought broader opportunities in the North, relocating to Cleveland and working as a clerk for a railway company while he studied law. He soon passed the state bar examination and founded his own successful practice as a court reporter.

Chesnutt first received national recognition as a writer in 1887, when his story "The Goophered Grapevine" appeared in the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly*. Narrated by an old black man named "Uncle Julius," written in African American dialect, and set in the rural South, the story seemed to have affinities with the regional folktales popularized by Joel Chandler Harris. But Chesnutt's Uncle Julius is a unique figure in nineteenth-century vernacular literature: he recounts plantation stories not out of sentimental nostalgia but in order to manipulate his white listeners to his own ends. The subversive humor and irony of Chesnutt's Uncle Julius stories subtly satirize nineteenth-century white people's condescending stereotypes of African Americans. Chesnutt soon negotiated a contract with Houghton Mifflin to publish a book-length collection of his stories, *The Conjure Woman*, which appeared in 1899. A second book, *"The Wife of His Youth" and Other Stories of the Color Line*, included stories which explore both urban and rural characters' experiences with race. Chesnutt followed this collection with a biography of Frederick Douglass and a series of novels that treat the plight of mixed-race people and social tensions in the South. Unfortunately, his novels never



[4112] Anonymous, *Two women hulling rice, Sapelo Island, Georgia* (c. 1900), courtesy of the Georgia Department of Archives and History.

CHESNUTT WEB ARCHIVE

[4112] Anonymous, *Two women hulling rice, Sapelo Island, Georgia* (c. 1900), courtesy of the Georgia Department of Archives and History. Technological advancements were slow to arrive in many parts of the country, particularly in the less industrialized South. Here, two African American women use a traditional mortar and pestle to remove the hulls from rice.

[4261] Anonymous, *Charles Chesnutt [portrait]* (1939), courtesy of Fisk University. Photograph of Charles W. Chesnutt, a pioneer African American author. Written in African American dialect, his “Uncle Julius” stories are similar to regional folktales popularized by white author Joel Chandler Harris. Chesnutt’s work, however, intentionally and subtly satirized the condescending stereotypes of African Americans during the nineteenth century.

[4268] Anonymous, *Charles Chesnutt study* (1906), courtesy of Fisk University. Charles W. Chesnutt worked as a school principal, a stenographer, and, eventually, a lawyer. The expansion of the magazine industry gave Chesnutt his first opportunity to publish. His works depicted both average southern blacks and those of mixed blood who lived on the color line.

[4269] Anonymous, *Charles Chesnutt* (n.d.), courtesy of Fisk University Library’s Special Collections. As a person of mixed race, Chesnutt felt removed from both white and black society. “I am too stuck up for colored folks,” he wrote, “and, of course, not recognized by whites.” From this distance, Chesnutt explored issues of race within the black community.

[4419] Anonymous, *African Americans in front of piano* (c. 1875–1900), courtesy of the New York Public Library. The values that informed parlor culture—the ability to devote the parlor space to formal display rather than stocking it with furnishings designed for private, daily use—were not limited to the wealthy or the urban in mid-nineteenth-century America.

achieved the popularity or acclaim of his short stories, and, by 1905, Chesnutt had difficulty publishing his work. As a new generation of African American writers produced the innovative literature associated with the Harlem Renaissance, Chesnutt found himself increasingly out of touch with both his black and his white audiences. Despite the decline at the end of his career, Chesnutt’s contributions to African American letters were foundational and significant. In recognition of his efforts, the NAACP awarded him the Spingarn Medal in 1928 for his groundbreaking realist representations of the “life and struggle of Americans of Negro descent.”

TEACHING TIPS

■ Unlike Joel Chandler Harris, Chesnutt insisted that his renditions of traditional African American folktales were not transcriptions but rather “the fruit of my own imagination.” He frequently incorporated elements from his reading of classical Greek and Roman literature into his stories; for instance, in “The Goophered Grapevine,” Henry is transformed into a kind of Bacchanalian vineyard figure. Ask students to think about the implications of Chesnutt’s “imaginative” additions to traditional African American tales. Why might he have been interested in incorporating classical elements into these stories? Why did he want to be known as a creator of stories rather than as a transcriber of existing folktales? Why might Harris and Chesnutt have had such different approaches to their characterization of themselves as authors?

■ Because his Uncle Julius stories contain a frame narrative from the point of view of a rather condescending white man, many of Chesnutt’s early readers probably assumed that the writer was white. In 1899, when he began to write full time, Chesnutt made his own racial identity more public. Ask students to think about the role of the white narrator in the Uncle Julius stories. Why might Chesnutt have adopted this narrative voice? Why might he have eventually felt compelled to publicize his own racial background as the stories became more popular? You might ask students to rewrite the frame narrative of Chesnutt’s work so that it is clearly not a white narrator. What would need to be changed? What would get left as is? How does this change the nature of the story?

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: Why does Uncle Julius tell the white narrator the story of the “goophered” vineyard? What effect does the story have on the narrator? What do we learn about Julius’s relationship to the land and its produce over the course of the tale?

Comprehension: What is the “Blue Vein Society” to which Ryder belongs in “The Wife of His Youth”? How do the Blue Veins participate in the construction of the social “color line” which Chesnutt found so fascinating? What values do the Blue Veins seem to promote among African Americans?

Context: Compare Uncle Julius to Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus. What kinds of relationships do they have with their white auditors? What seems to motivate their storytelling sessions? How do the trickster tales related in Julius's and Remus's stories differ?

Context: Compare Chesnutt's representations of African American dialect to Alexander Posey's representations of the speech of Creek Indians. What characterizes each group's speech patterns? How do the speakers describe and relate to members of their own race? How do the speakers describe and relate to people of other races?

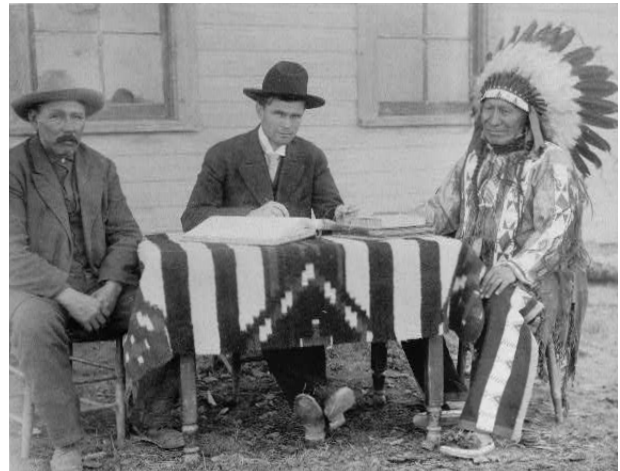
Exploration: Chesnutt was part of an early tradition of preserving traditional folktales and recording folk customs. His representations of African American beliefs about "conjuring" and "hoodoo"—spiritual practices that combined African, Caribbean, and Christian religious traditions—offer important insight into African American culture. How do Chesnutt's representations of "conjuring" relate to later African American writers' interest in these practices? How might Chesnutt have influenced Toni Morrison's interest in the supernatural?

Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa) (1858–1939)

A Santee Sioux, physician, government agent, and spokesperson for Indian rights, Charles Alexander Eastman was also the first well-known, widely read Native American author. A fully acculturated Indian, Eastman worked to create understanding between Native Americans and Euro-Americans and sometimes found himself in the conflicted position of being caught between the two cultures. His writing resonates with his efforts both to make Indian traditions accessible to a white audience and to define his own identity as an Indian and as an American.

Eastman was separated from his parents at an early age when their tribe fled to Canada after the ill-fated Minnesota Dakota conflict. His father, Many Lightnings, was presumed dead so Eastman was given a traditional Sioux upbringing by his uncle and his grandmother. In 1869, however, Eastman found out that his father was not dead but had in fact changed his name to Jacob Eastman, adopted Euro-American customs, and converted to Christianity. Changing his son's name from Ohiyesa to Charles Alexander, Jacob Eastman took the boy from the Sioux community in Canada and raised him on a farm in South Dakota. With his father's encouragement, Eastman received a Euro-American education and eventually earned a degree from Dartmouth and an M.D. from Boston University.

In 1890 Eastman accepted what would be the first of many positions with the U.S. government, becoming an agency physician at the Sioux reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. There he witnessed the aftermath of the tragic massacre at Wounded Knee, in which many



[1089] John S. (Jack) Coldwell, Jr., U.S. allotting surveyor and his interpreter making an American citizen of Chief American Horse, Oglala Sioux (c. 1907), courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History Department.

EASTMAN WEB ARCHIVE

[1061] Anonymous, *Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses (Tashun-Kakokipa), Oglala Sioux; standing in front of his lodge, Pine Ridge, South Dakota* (1891), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Still Picture Branch. Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses initially resisted white encroachment into Lakota lands. In the late 1870s, realizing that the survival of his people was at stake, he became a friend to the whites and the president of the Pine Ridge Indian Council.

[1089] John S. (Jack) Coldwell, Jr., *U.S. allotting surveyor and his interpreter making an American citizen of Chief American Horse, Oglala Sioux* (c. 1907), courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History Department. According to the U.S. government and the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, assimilation, or cultural conversion to European American ways of life, was the “ideal” goal for Native Americans. For some, compliance with U.S. policies meant the privileges of citizenship. But it was not until 1924 that the United States officially granted all Native Americans U.S. citizenship.

[1843] J. N. Choate, *Sioux boys as they were dressed on arrival at the Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania, 10/5/1879* (1879), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Still Pictures Branch. The mission of the Carlisle Indian School was to rid Indian children of their traditional ways and to “civilize” them for assimilation into white culture.

[4219] Western Photograph Company, *Gathering up the dead at the battlefield of Wounded Knee, South Dakota* (1891), courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution. U.S. soldiers standing in front of a wagon full of dead Sioux. A blizzard delayed the burial of the dead. Eventually the Sioux were buried in a mass grave, with little effort made to identify the bodies.

[7418] Anonymous, *Boy's moccasins, Lakotah* (n.d.), courtesy of the New York State Historical Association, Thaw Collection. Reservation period (post-1880) beadwork on these dress moccasins shows how the American flag

Sioux who had participated in the Ghost Dance religion were killed or injured in a raid by the U.S. army. While at Pine Ridge, Eastman met and married Elaine Goodale, a reservation teacher and social worker. The couple soon relocated to St. Paul, Minnesota, where Eastman practiced medicine and eventually held other government jobs, at one point heading a federal project to give Anglicized surnames to Sioux Indians. In the early twentieth century, Eastman also helped establish the “scouting movement” in the United States, infusing the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts with his interpretations of Native American culture.

With his wife's substantial editorial assistance, Eastman embarked on a successful literary career in 1900. His account of his traditional Sioux childhood, *Indian Boyhood*, was an enormous success and was reprinted at least ten times within his lifetime. He also published several collections of traditional Sioux lore and history, making traditional Native American animal tales accessible to a white audience. He advanced his interpretations of Indian spirituality and culture in *The Soul of the Indian* and *The Indian Today*. His moving autobiography, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, chronicles his experiences in the “white world” and among the Sioux at Pine Ridge. In 1921 Eastman separated from his wife, who, according to many scholars, had a significant role in the writing and editing of his work. He did not publish again in his lifetime. Although he continued to lecture and occasionally became involved in various Indian causes, Eastman spent most of the end of his life in seclusion in a remote cabin in Ontario.

TEACHING TIPS

■ In Chapters VI and VII of *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, Eastman narrates the development of the **Ghost Dance** religion among the Sioux. Explain to your students that the Ghost Dance was a Native American response to Euro-American encroachments on their land and way of life. A powerful apocalyptic vision of the overthrow of white domination and a return to traditional Native American ways, the Ghost Dance sparked a pan-Indian, intertribal movement that frightened white authorities with its intensity. Started by the Paiute prophet Wovoka, who believed himself to be a Messianic figure, the Ghost Dance involved adopting traditional clothing and customs, singing and chanting traditional songs, and participating in a trance-inducing round dance designed to inspire dead Indian ancestors to return and reclaim their land. The movement ended tragically when white authorities killed 150 Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee for their involvement in the Ghost Dance religion. After you give students this background information, ask them to evaluate Eastman's account of the Ghost Dance and the massacre at Wounded Knee. With whom are his sympathies? How does he portray the development of the Ghost Dance? How does he portray the massacre at Wounded Knee? What is his own relationship to the movement?

■ In the opening sentences of Chapter VI, Eastman explains his own, somewhat liminal position on the Pine Ridge Agency: “In

1890 a ‘white doctor’ who was also an Indian was something of a novelty.” Ask students to analyze Eastman’s characterization of his own identity. Why does he describe himself as a “white” doctor? Why does he put quotation marks around the word “white”? What problems are inherent in perceiving himself as simultaneously “white” and “also an Indian”?

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: What is Eastman’s relationship to the other Sioux Indians at the Pine Ridge Agency? What kinds of distinctions does he perceive among the various Indians he encounters there? How do his education and upbringing set him apart? What kind of relationship does he have with non-Indian authorities at the Agency?

Comprehension: What was the Ghost Dance religion? How does Eastman represent it in his autobiography?

Context: Read Eastman’s representation of the traditional Sioux tale “Turtle Story,” featured in the archive. How does Smoky Day, the wise Indian narrator of the story, compare to Joel Chandler Harris’s Uncle Remus? How does the tale itself compare to Uncle Remus’s stories? What kinds of skills does the turtle rely on? How does he compare to the animal figures in the Remus stories?

Exploration: Eastman helped establish the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, establishing summer camps that he advertised as directed by a “real Indian” and publishing “Scout Books” on such topics as how to make tepees and canoes. He seemed invested in providing white children with “Indian” experiences in the outdoors. Why might Eastman have been interested in transmitting his interpretation of Native American culture in this way? How effective do you think the scouting movement has been in educating Euro-American children about Native American customs? Where do you see similar kinds of interest in (and commodification of) Indian culture at work in American society today?

motif was incorporated into Native American design.

[8507] Charles Eastman, “Turtle Story” (1909), courtesy of *Wigwam Evenings, Sioux Folk Tales*. This collection of Sioux tales by Eastman and his wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman, contains twenty-seven Sioux narratives, including creation stories and animal legends.

Alexander Posey (1873–1908)

Alexander Posey recorded his insights into Creek Indian tribal politics and Native American customs in his poetry, journalism, and political satire. He lived through a crucial period in the history of the Creek Nation, when the tribe’s land base and political autonomy were threatened by “progressive” reforms intended to force Indians to assimilate to Euro-American culture. The creation of the state of Oklahoma in the early twentieth century also significantly impacted the Creeks: fierce debates raged about whether to admit Oklahoma as a single state or whether to organize part of its territory into a separate Indian state. Posey registered these conflicts in his sharp and often satirical writing, in the process creating a unique record of both Native American politics and Native American literary developments. His interest in accurately representing the dialect and speech patterns of his Creek characters has made his work an important chronicle of his



[5168] Russell Lee, *Street scene, Muskogee, Oklahoma* (1939), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USF33-012332-M3 DLC].

POSEY WEB ARCHIVE

[1121] Harper's *Weekly, Scenes and Incidents of the Settlement of Oklahoma* [Land Rush pictures] (1889), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-96521]. These illustrations from *Harper's Weekly*, May 18, 1889, are titled (from top to bottom): The arrival of the first train at Guthrie—The head of the line outside of the Guthrie land-office on the opening day—The Guthrie post-office.

[5168] Russell Lee, *Street scene, Muskogee, Oklahoma* (1939), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USF33-012332-M3 DLC]. Alexander Posey

own time and a source of inspiration for subsequent Native American writers.

Posey was born into a bicultural and bilingual family: his mother was a Creek Indian and his father was a white man who had been raised in the Creek community. He grew up learning to appreciate both Native American and Euro-American traditions and benefited from a traditional western education at the Bacone Indian University in Muskogee. It was at Bacone that Posey began composing poetry, most of which is heavily influenced by the British and American Romantic tradition. While some scholars see Posey's poetry as derivative and constrained by European traditions, others point out that the

Romantic worldview that pervades his work in some ways coincides with traditional Indian beliefs. Like the Romantics, many Native American cultures are committed to a respect for nature, a belief in the interrelation of all things, and a refusal to impose a sharp division between the material and the spiritual.

After leaving Bacone in 1895, Posey was elected to the lower chamber of the Creek National Council and embarked on a long career of public service as an administrator to tribal schools. In 1902, he also began serving his community as a journalist, establishing the *Eufaula Indian Journal*, the first daily newspaper published by an Indian. As editor of the paper, Posey composed the works for which he is best known today: the Fus Fixico letters. Narrated by a Creek character named Fus Fixico (which translates as either "Warrior Bird" or "Heartless Bird"), the letters offer humorous political and cultural commentary written from the perspective and in the dialect of Indian speakers. Revolving around the conversations of four men—and usually centering on the monologues of Hotgun Harjo, a medicine man—the letters narrate Indian responses to political issues and lampoon the corruption that was rampant in Indian Territory. Posey's tendency to parody the names of Euro-American political figures with clever puns—"Rooster Feather" for President Roosevelt, "Itscoked" for Secretary of the Interior Ethan Allen Hitchcock—deflates the power of these public figures and critiques their pretensions to authority. The Fus Fixico letters do not always correspond to Posey's own convictions or political positions; instead, they offer a variety of perspectives on the difficult issues that faced the Creeks in his time. Tragically, Posey died before he was able to completely fulfill the promise of his innovative writing. He drowned at the age of thirty-five when his boat capsized on the North Canadian River.

TEACHING TIPS

■ In a commencement address that he delivered at Bacone University, Posey celebrated the achievements of Sequoyah, the Cherokee who created a **syllabary** that enabled his tribe to record its language in written form. Later, Posey wrote one of his most famous

poems, “Ode to Sequoyah,” on the same subject. Have your students read “Ode to Sequoyah” out loud. Ask them to think about why Posey might have identified with Sequoyah. What is the role of writing in Indian culture, according to Posey? What is the relationship between Posey’s representations of Indian dialect and Sequoyah’s creation of a syllabary for the Cherokee language? You may want to define the ode, a subgenre of the lyric, for students. An ode (from the Greek *aeidein*, to sing, chant) is more than a poem that celebrates an occasion or individual; it is a poem that celebrates language and investigates its power to combat mortality and the ravages of time. Why is the form of the ode, then, an appropriate one for discussing Sequoyah? You may want to have students compare Posey’s poem to classic odes such as John Keats’s “Ode to a Grecian Urn” or Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind.”

■ Although the Fus Fixico letters (found in the archive) were sometimes reprinted in Anglo newspapers like the *Kansas City Star* and Posey was frequently asked to contribute to larger, national newspapers, he generally confined his publication to the *Indian Journal*. Ask students to consider why Posey was not interested in syndicating his work to a larger audience. How might nineteenth-century white Americans have responded to the Fus Fixico letters? How might they have responded to Posey’s representations of Indian dialect? Why might Posey have been invested in keeping his work specific to his local community?

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: How is the poem “Hotgun on the Death of Yadeka Harjo” different from Posey’s other poetry? What is the role of dialect in this poem? How does the use of dialect affect the meter and rhyme scheme? How does the use of dialect impact the poem’s status as an elegy (that is, a poem written as a memorial to someone who has died)?

Comprehension: What proper names appear in the Fus Fixico letters? Whose names are most frequently turned into puns?

Context: Both Posey and Joel Chandler Harris published their dialect stories in the form of newspaper columns. Why do you think dialect pieces were so popular with newspaper readers? What do the Fus Fixico letters have in common with Harris’s Uncle Remus stories? How are they different? What kinds of audiences were Posey and Harris writing for?

Exploration: How might Posey’s work have influenced subsequent Native American writers like N. Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich, and Leslie Marmon Silko? Do you see a relationship between Posey’s depiction of Indian language patterns and metaphors and these later writers’ development of a Native American style?

Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) (1876–1938)

Writer, musician, educator, and Indian rights activist, Zitkala-Ša (or Red Bird) was born on the Sioux Pine Ridge Reservation in South

attended the Bacone Indian University in Muskogee. In his life as in his writing, Posey confronted the forms and traditions of European American culture while commenting on the difficult social and political issues facing the Creek Indians.

[5569] Anonymous, *Indian teams hauling 60 miles to market the 1100 bushels of wheat raised by the school* (c. 1900), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration [NWDNS-75-SE-39A]. Government attempts to “civilize” or assimilate Native Americans included the use of boarding schools and model colonies where Indians could learn farming or manufacturing techniques. This photo is from the Seger Colony in the Oklahoma Territory.

[6823] F. W. Greenough, *Se-Quo-Yah [Sequoyah]* (c. 1836), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZC4-4815]. Half-length portrait of Sequoyah, dressed in a blue robe, holding a tablet that shows the Cherokee alphabet. Sequoyah developed a Cherokee syllabary that enabled his people to write in their own language.

[8508] Alexander Posey, “Ode to Sequoyah” (1910), courtesy of the Library of Congress [10022763]. Posey dedicated this ode to Sequoyah, the Cherokee who created a syllabary that enabled his tribe to record its language in written form. An ode (from the Greek *aeidein*, to sing, chant) is a poem that celebrates language and investigates its power to combat mortality and the ravages of time.

[9068] Alexander Posey, Letter 16 of the Fus Fixico letters (1903), courtesy of the Reed College Library. Posey offers humorous political and social commentary from a Native American perspective through the characters in his Fus Fixico Letters. In letter 16, Fus Fixico satirizes the policies of the Roosevelt Administration.

[9069] Alexander Posey, Letter 18 of the Fus Fixico letters (1903), courtesy of the Reed College Library. In letter 18, Fus Fixico comments on U.S. Indian policy and the propaganda that supported it. Fus Fixico uses humor to address governmental policies that essentially stripped Native Americans of their cultural heritage.

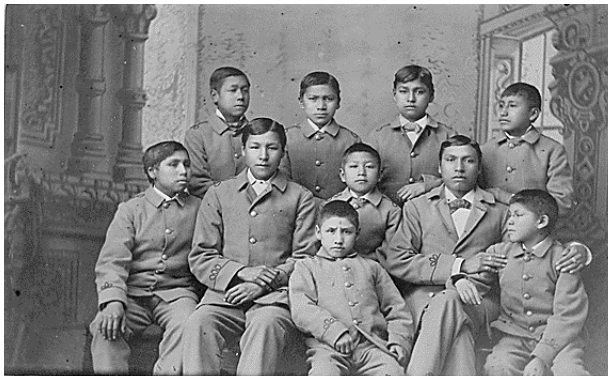
Dakota. After her white father abandoned the family, she was brought up by her Indian mother in traditional Sioux ways. At the age of eight, Zitkala-Ša's life was transformed when white missionaries came to Pine Ridge and convinced her to enroll in a boarding school in Wabash, Indiana. Part of a movement to "civilize" Indian children by removing them from their native culture and indoctrinating them in Euro-American ways, the school trained Indian pupils in manual labor, Christianity, and the English language. Zitkala-Ša found it a hostile environment and struggled to adapt.

After three years at school, Zitkala-Ša returned to Pine Ridge only to find herself estranged from her traditional culture and from her mother. While she was not completely comfortable with the Euro-American culture she encountered at school, she was also no longer at home with Sioux customs. She returned to school and eventually received scholarships to Earlham College in Indiana and to the New England Conservatory of Music to study violin. After completing her studies she became a music teacher at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania.

Frustrated by her position on the margins of both Indian and white culture and increasingly outraged by the injustices she saw visited on Native Americans, Zitkala-Ša resolved to express her feelings publicly in writing. Her reflective autobiographical essays on her experiences among the Sioux and in white culture appeared in the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly* in 1900. In these pieces, Zitkala-Ša explored what she called the "problem of her inner self," grappling with the question of her cultural identity and her relationship with her family. She also used the essays as occasions to expose the injustices perpetrated by whites on Native Americans and to critique the insensitivity of white strategies for "civilizing" Indians.

After the publication of the autobiographical essays, Zitkala-Ša composed an Indian opera called *Sun Dance* and compiled collections of traditional Sioux legends and stories that she translated into English. Her outspoken views eventually alienated authorities at the Carlisle School, so she left to work

at Standing Rock Reservation. There she met and married Raymond Bonnin, another Sioux activist. Together they became involved in the Society of American Indians, founded the National Council of American Indians, and worked tirelessly on behalf of Native American causes. Zitkala-Ša died in Washington, D.C., and was buried in Arlington Cemetery.



[1801] J. N. Choate, *Group of Omaha boys in cadet uniforms, Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania* (1880), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration [NWDNS-75-IP-1-10].

TEACHING TIPS

■ In the preface to one of her collections of Sioux legends and traditional stories, Zitkala-Ša explained that her goal was to "transplant the native spirit of these tales—root and all—into the English language, since America in the last few centuries has acquired a second

tongue.” Ask students to consider the implications of “transplanting” stories from one language and culture into another. Why might Zitkala-Ša have chosen this plant metaphor to characterize her translation project? You might also ask them to analyze the role of language and translation in Zitkala-Ša’s autobiographical writings. What kinds of problems does she encounter when she is forced to communicate in English at the missionary school? At one point, she describes the school authorities’ English speech as creating a “bedlam within which I was securely tied.” What kinds of emotional frustrations does her inability to understand or speak English create? How does her eventual success speaking English at a college oratorical contest resonate with these issues?

■ Have your students examine the images of the Indian boarding schools featured in the archive. They could also read Louise Erdrich’s poem “Indian Boarding School: The Runaways.” Ask your students to write poems or prose reflections on what the boarding school experience would have been like for the different people who lived and worked there (teachers, janitors, students, the people who lived in the town nearby).

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: How does Zitkala-Ša describe the education in traditional Sioux ways that she receives from her mother? What strategies does her mother use to teach her such skills as beadwork? What other values and skills does her mother teach her? How does the education she receives from her mother compare with the education she receives at the mission school? What kinds of discipline does she encounter at school?

Comprehension: As she rides the train on her first trip to school, Zitkala-Ša narrates her feelings about the telegraph poles that she sees out of the train windows: “I was quite breathless on seeing one familiar object. It was the telegraph pole which strode by at short paces. . . . Often I had stopped, on my way down the road, to hold my ear against the pole, and, hearing its low moaning, I used to wonder what the paleface had done to hurt it.” Later, she characterizes her own fractured identity in similar terms: “Now a cold bare pole I seemed to be, planted in a strange earth.” Why does the image of the telegraph pole recur in Zitkala-Ša’s autobiographical essays? What is the significance of this symbol of technological progress and linguistic communication? How does it figure Zitkala-Ša’s own concerns with language and with white culture? Why does Zitkala-Ša eventually come to see herself as a “cold bare pole”?

Context: Like fellow Sioux writer Charles Alexander Eastman, Zitkala-Ša found that her Euro-American education left her in a somewhat marginal social position: she did not feel wholly comfortable within white culture, but neither was she completely at home with traditional Sioux customs. How do Zitkala-Ša’s efforts to solve the “problem of her inner self,” as she puts it, compare to Eastman’s attempts to construct a role for himself as a “white doctor” who is also an

ZITKALA-ŠA WEB ARCHIVE

[1056] William S. Soule, *Arapaho camp with buffalo meat drying near Fort Dodge, Kansas* (1870), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Still Picture Branch. Parlor culture was not limited to white, upper-class women; less privileged women struggled with the imposition of these values. In her essays, Zitkala-Ša poignantly narrates her Sioux mother’s difficulty in making the transition from her traditional dwelling to a Euro-American style cottage.

[1801] J. N. Choate, *Group of Omaha boys in cadet uniforms, Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania* (1880), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration [NWDNS-75-IP-1-10]. Ten uniformed Omaha boys of various ages pose at the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Many schools like Carlisle, which was one of the most famous and where Zitkala-Ša taught, opened in the nineteenth century with the purpose of immersing Native American children in “civilized” European American ways.

[5365] Frances Benjamin Johnston, *Carlisle Indian School* (1901), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-119133]. Photograph of students at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Poet Marianne Moore taught at the school for four years.

[5810] Unknown, *Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Bonnin), a Dakota Sioux Indian* (c. 1900), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-119349]. Portrait of Zitkala-Ša, a writer, musician, educator, and Indian rights activist. Much of Zitkala-Ša’s work was driven by the injustices she witnessed against Native Americans and the feeling that she lived on the margins of both Indian and white culture.

[5819] Zitkala-Ša, *An Indian Teacher among Indians* (1900), courtesy of Cornell University, *Making of America* Digital Collection. Zitkala-Ša’s essays on her experiences among the Sioux and in white culture appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1900.

[5820] Zitkala-Ša, *Impressions of an Indian Childhood* (1900), courtesy of Cornell University, *Making of America* Digital Collection. Frustrated by her position on the margins of both Indian and white culture and outraged by the injustices she saw visited on Native Americans, Zitkala-Ša resolved to express her feelings publicly in writing.

Indian? What strategies do the two writers adopt to deal with the conflicts they encounter upon returning to the Sioux agency? How are their attitudes toward their roles within traditional Sioux society different? How might gender have impacted their reactions to their status as “educated Indians”?

Exploration: In “The Indian Autobiography: Origins, Type, and Function,” literary critic Arnold Krupat argues that American Indian autobiography is a textual equivalent to the frontier; it is “a ground on which two cultures meet.” To what extent is this true of the form and content of Zitkala-Ša’s writing? How does her work compare to earlier bicultural autobiographical accounts, like those of Mary Rowlandson, William Apess, or Frederick Douglass? How does she draw on and modify the tradition of literary self-making pioneered by these writers? How does her status as a woman and as a Native American impact her narration of her own life?

Suggested Author Pairings

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS, CHARLES W. CHESNUTT, AND ALEXANDER POSEY

Authors of stories and sketches written in racialized dialect, Harris, Chesnutt, and Posey attempted to capture the rhythms and idioms of African American and Native American English speech. Harris and Chesnutt shared an interest in recording traditional African American folktales, but they created very different characters through which to narrate their stories. While Chesnutt’s Uncle Julius on the surface resembles Harris’s Uncle Remus—a stereotype of a contented slave anxious to serve and entertain white people—Uncle Julius is actually much more crafty and subversive, and much more skilled in looking out for his own best interest. Race is an important distinction between these authors. Critics sometimes argue that, as a white writer, Harris was not always sensitive to or aware of the cultural implications of the African American stories he recorded. Posey and Chesnutt, on the other hand, were of Native American and African American ancestry, respectively, though they sometimes found that their positions as writers and recorders of the culture distanced them from those communities.

MARK TWAIN AND BRET HARTE

Twain and Harte were humorists and journalists who got their start in the American West and ended up creating archetypal characters in American literature. While Harte’s stories have shaped the genre of the Western, Twain created the naïve country boy narrator in *Huckleberry Finn*. Harte’s work can be much more sentimental than Twain’s, perhaps explaining why he fell out of popular favor as realism gained strength over the course of the century. Twain, on the other hand, remained a best-selling author, a celebrity, and an icon of American literature until his death and long after.

**SARAH ORNE JEWETT, MARY E. WILKINS FREEMAN,
AND KATE CHOPIN**

Authors whose stories and novels participate in the regionalist tradition, Jewett, Freeman, and Chopin all focus on the position of women within the regional settings they so evocatively describe. Jewett and Freeman chronicle the impact of economic depression and lingering Puritan values on communities in rural New England, while Chopin records the French Catholic flavor of life in New Orleans and rural Louisiana. Chopin depicts Louisiana as in some ways less severe and repressed than Jewett and Freeman's New England, and her frank portrayal of women's sexual desire made her work more controversial than theirs. Still, she shares with Jewett and Freeman an interest in the effects of rigid social conventions on both downtrodden and rebellious women.

**CHARLES ALEXANDER EASTMAN (OHIYESA) AND
ZITKALA-ŠA (GERTRUDE SIMMONS BONNIN)**

The fact that these authors are listed under both an Anglicized name and a traditional Native American name is significant, for they are characterized by the tensions created by their attempts to mediate between white and traditional Indian culture. Both Sioux Indians, they attended white boarding schools and colleges and found value in their Euro-American educations even though they were never completely at home in white culture. At the same time, they found that their acculturation into white ways separated them from other Native Americans. Eastman found himself in the awkward position of being a "'white doctor' who was also an Indian," while Zitkala-Ša felt out of place as "neither a wild Indian nor a tame one."

CORE CONTEXTS

The Best Seat in the House: Parlors and the Development of Gentility in Nineteenth-Century America

When Huckleberry Finn meets the rural Grangerford family in the course of his adventures on the Mississippi, he is awed by the grandeur of their house: "I hadn't seen no house out in the country before that was so nice and had so much style. . . . There warn't no bed in the parlor, not a sign of a bed." Huck's naïve description of the Grangerfords' "stylishness" is of course meant to be funny, but Mark Twain's satire of the family's genteel pretensions depends for its humor on his audience's knowledge of what might be called "parlor culture." By the mid-nineteenth century, middle-class Americans had come to believe that the appearance and physical layout of their homes could both express and construct an aura of domestic harmony, social success, and moral rectitude. In particular, the **parlor**—a formal space set aside for social ceremonies such as receiving guests or hosting tea par-



[4076] Anonymous, *Writing at the Quarry farm* [Mark Twain] (c. 1871–75), courtesy of the Mark Twain House, Hartford, CT.

ties—came to signify the refinement and comfort of respectable family living. Primarily designed for display rather than use, the parlor was generally the “best room” in the house and usually contained furnishings and knick-knacks that cost more than the objects in the house that were intended for everyday use. The fact that the Grangerfords do not have a bed in their parlor—that is, they can afford to devote the space to formal display rather than stock it with furnishings designed for private, daily use—marks them as genteel and cultured in Huck’s eyes.

As Twain’s satirical description of the Grangerfords’ decorous parlor in backwoods Arkansas makes clear, the values that informed parlor culture were not limited to the wealthy or the urban in mid-nineteenth-century America. As industrialization and mass production made furniture and textiles affordable to even the lower middle classes, Americans everywhere began to create parlors to serve as visual assertions of their sophistication and good taste. Architectural plan books such as S. B. Reed’s *House-Plans for Everybody* (1878) offered designs for inexpensive houses that, though small, included front parlors meant to signal respectability and refinement. Plans like the “Design for \$600 Cottage” featured in the archive reveal that a parlor was perceived as necessary in even the most humble home. Even Americans whose dwellings were so small that there was no room for a formal parlor made an effort to adorn their living spaces with the decorative objects that were integral to parlor culture, such as the wreath, birdcage, and rocking chair visible in a nineteenth-century photograph of a primitive cabin on the Nebraska plains.

Intended to serve as a buffer zone between the outside world and the private domestic areas of the bedroom and kitchen, the parlor was a semi-public space that both protected people’s privacy and publicized their accomplishments. Thick carpets muffled noises, while protective doilies and layers of lace curtains and heavy draperies shielded

the room and its furnishings from bright light and prying eyes. The large-scale, luxuriously upholstered furniture of the ideal “parlor suite” cradled the body even as it controlled posture. But while the parlor was shrouded and protected, it was at the same time designed to open itself to display. Curio cabinets, mantles, and shelves exhibited the photographs and knick-knacks that occupants felt expressed their individuality and good taste. Parlors often contained pianos, handmade artwork, and embroidery stands intended to show off the inhabitants’ domestic accomplishments. The effect, though cluttered and oppressive by today’s standards, was meant to be simultaneously comfortable and cultured, inviting and impressive.

While some social commentators complained that most parlors went unused—Americans often felt that their parlor furniture was “too good” to actually sit on—homeowners continued to perceive them as important rooms. The parlor could be used for evening parties at which guests would listen to piano performances, sing, or



[8263] Anonymous, *One of the Many Parlors in a New York Apartment-Hotel* (1904), courtesy of *Cosmopolitan* (no. 38, Dec. 1904).

play specially developed “parlor games” such as charades, puzzles, or “Twenty Questions.” At Christmas-time, the decorated tree would stand in the parlor. Because they were not in constant use, parlors offered a secluded place for young couples to court one another. In Mary E. Wilkins Freeman’s short story “The Revolt of ‘Mother,’” Mother is particularly frustrated that her daughter, Nancy, is forced to host her fiancé in the family’s kitchen because Father is unwilling to spend money on a parlor. Among wealthy city-dwellers, parlors were the location of choice for hosting “callers.” The formal ritual of social calling, in which women paid brief visits or left specially designed “calling cards” at the homes of their female acquaintances, persisted into the early twentieth century and thus kept parlor culture alive. The ubiquity and conventionality of social calling is clear in Kate Chopin’s novel, *The Awakening*. Edna Pontellier scandalizes her husband and her community when she stops receiving callers or making social visits and instead opts to structure her time according to her own desires.

As Chopin’s novel illustrates, parlor culture could seem unappealing, suffocating, and overly regulated. It is significant that Edna’s social revolt is enacted through her decision to spend her time in successively more unconventional domestic spaces: she first retreats to her painting studio, then to Mademoiselle Reisz’s unfashionable and “dingy” apartment, and eventually takes the radical step of moving out of her husband’s formal house and into a small home she calls the “pigeon house.” While Edna’s rejection of convention is to a certain extent enabled by her wealth, leisure, and social status, less privileged women struggled in their own ways with the imposition of the values of parlor culture. In her autobiographical essays, Zitkala-Ša poignantly narrates her Sioux mother’s difficulty in making the transition from living in her traditional tipi to inhabiting a Euro-American style cottage. Never completely comfortable with the curtains and tablecloths in her cabin, Zitkala-Ša’s mother continues to cook and perform most of her domestic chores in a nearby canvas tipi. As Zitkala-Ša explains it, “My mother had never gone to school, and though she meant always to give up her own customs for such of the white man’s ways as pleased her, she made only compromises.” Such “compromises” were, for many, more meaningful acts of self-expression than strict adherence to the norms of parlor culture.

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: What furnishings and objects characterized the ideal parlor? How did some Americans effect compromises with the requirements of parlor culture?

Comprehension: How did most Americans use their parlors? What kinds of domestic activities might have been considered improper in a parlor?



[5770] John C. Grabill, *Home of Mrs. American Horse* (1891), courtesy of the Library of Congress, American Memory, Grabill Collection [LOT 3076-2, no. 3638].

“BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE” WEB ARCHIVE

[1056] William S. Soule, *Arapaho camp with buffalo meat drying near Fort Dodge, Kansas* (1870), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Still Picture Branch. Parlor culture was not limited to white, upper-class women; less privileged women also struggled with the imposition of these values. In her essays, Zitkala-Ša narrates her Sioux mother’s difficulty in moving from her traditional dwelling to a Euro-American style cottage.

[1207] George Harper Houghton, *Family of slaves at the Gaines’ house* (1861), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC4-4575]. For many slaves, merely having a large enough home on the plantation where they worked proved problematic.

[3609] Anonymous, *Design for \$600 Cottage* (1883), courtesy of Cornell University Library. Sketch and floor plan of modest four-room cottage with high, narrow windows and a chimney.

[4076] Unknown, *Writing at the Quarry farm* [Mark Twain] (c. 1871–75), courtesy of the Mark Twain House, Hartford, CT. Photograph of Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) in a white suit, writing at a small round table in front of a modest fireplace at Quarry Farm. Though Clemens satirized the corruption and genteel conventions of high society, he aspired to higher social status himself.

[4423] Anonymous, *The First Step* [Godey's Lady's Book] (June 1858), courtesy of Hope Greenberg, University of Vermont. These homespun Americans might be the characters in Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*. The parlor was felt to be necessary in even the most humble homes. Even when there was no room for a formal parlor, Americans adorned their living spaces with decorative objects.

[5770] John C. Grabill, *Home of Mrs. American Horse* (1891), courtesy of the Library of Congress, American Memory, Grabill Collection [LOT 3076-2, no. 3638]. Uncovered tipi frame with Oglala women and children inside, most likely near the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota. In contrast to typical Euro-American dwellings, canvas tipis were where Native American women performed most of their domestic chores.

[5799] Anonymous, *Ladies S.J.A. Glee Club 1897–1900 Breckenridge, Colo.* (c. 1897), courtesy of the Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library. Breckenridge, Colorado, was first settled in 1859 when gold was discovered in the Blue River. Glee clubs—or choral societies—were an important way of socializing in and domesticating the frontier town.

[8263] Anonymous, *One of the Many Parlors in a New York Apartment-Hotel* (1904), courtesy of *Cosmopolitan* [no. 38, Dec. 1904]. While most Americans, from the very rich to the humblest frontier family, had some parlor or leisure space in their homes, rooms such as this one in a Manhattan apartment exemplify the vast divide between the rich and the poor and the urban and the rural that existed in this country at the turn of the twentieth century.

Comprehension: Examine the architectural plans for Euro-American houses and the diagrams of traditional Native American tipis featured in the archive. What kinds of domestic values did these different spatial arrangements promote? Do they have any features in common?

Context: How is Mademoiselle Reisz's apartment described in *The Awakening*? Does she have a traditional parlor? How does her home compare with the Ratignolles' home? How do the two homes reflect their different inhabitants' attitudes toward social convention? How do Mademoiselle Reisz's and Madame Ratignolle's attitudes toward their shared hobby of piano playing differ?

Context: In Bret Harte's "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," the outcasts fix up and inhabit an abandoned cabin. How do they outfit the cabin's interior? How do they occupy themselves? Do the outcasts in some sense replicate parlor ideals in the abandoned cabin?

Context: Why does Mother move into the barn in Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's "The Revolt of 'Mother' "? What kind of reaction does her decision provoke in Father? Do her actions change the power dynamics within their marriage? If so, to what extent?

Exploration: Do contemporary American homes contain rooms similar to the nineteenth-century parlor? What kinds of rooms currently fulfill the roles that parlors used to fill?

Exploration: In contemporary American culture, consumers are inundated with decorating and homemaking advice: a "Home and Garden" channel on cable television dispenses round the clock insights on homemaking, while dozens of magazines suggest innumerable projects for improving one's domestic space. Why do you think these television shows and magazines are so popular? What kind of audience are they trying to reach? How do they promote particular cultural values by celebrating particular domestic arrangements and pursuits?

Exploration: How do contemporary films convey information about characters through their home decor?

Moving Pictures: Native American Self-Narration

In their coverage of Native American autobiographical texts, literary anthologies tend to focus on works by Indian authors who wrote their own stories in English (such as Zitkala-Ša or Charles Alexander Eastman) or on those who dictated their oral narratives to white translators and editors (such as Black Elk). But Native American autobiographical expressions are in fact part of a richer and more diverse tradition of representational practices that is often overlooked. Drawing on traditions of pictography, oral storytelling, performance, and dance, these acts of self-narration do not necessarily conform to Euro-American standards of autobiography: they are not written and they usually do not follow European conventions of chronological narration or closure. Instead, many Native American autobiographical texts rely on visual and oral expression, anecdotal orderings of significant

events, and an emphasis on communal relationships rather than individual development. The collaborative mode of Native American self-expression could also extend to the performance of a text—friends and assistants could help storytellers, dancers, singers, and performers enact their autobiographical accounts. Given the nature of Native American ideas of self, narration, and representation, scholar Hertha Dawn Wong argues that “the word *autobiography* (or, self-life-writing) is inappropriate. . . . A more suitable term might be *communo-biooratory* (or, community-life-speaking), since its roots reflect the communal and often oral nature of early Native American autobiographical expressions.” Thus, while non-written Native American texts can be difficult for non-Indians to understand, they are crucial records of Indian self-expression unmediated by the imposition of European cultural standards and expectations.

Of the more than five hundred languages that were spoken by indigenous peoples in North America prior to contact with Europeans, not one of them had a written alphabet. Instead, sophisticated forms of visual and oral notation and recording allowed authors to represent their stories to listeners, viewers, and participants. **Pictographic narratives** consisting of symbols, totems, and emblems conveyed expressions of personal and group identity as well as spiritual or military experiences. In Meso America in particular these systems were phonetic and quite complex. In some tribes this symbolic language was so highly evolved that individuals could “read” about one another by examining the pictures on robes, tipis, and shields without needing any accompanying oral explanation. An animal skin tipi belonging to Kiowa chief Little Bluff, for example, was emblazoned with symbolic records of the Kiowas’ military successes that would have been legible to any Plains Indian viewer. Images of American soldiers felled by braves’ arrows and lances attest to the tribe’s martial prowess, while vertical rows of tomahawks and decorated lances might have served as records of especially important exploits or as “coup” counts. A common Native American practice, **coup counting** was a historical record of an individual warrior’s feats of bravery. Each time he touched an enemy in battle, either with his hand or with a special “coup stick,” a Native American warrior acquired prestige and power—and the right to brag about his military successes. Rows of pictographic images could serve as a kind of account book or mnemonic device to enable a warrior to recite his triumphs. Clothing could serve a similar autobiographical function: painter and ethnographer George Catlin noted that Mandan chief Mah-to-toh-pa, or Four Bears, was famous for his pictographic buffalo skin robe. Drawing on the robe’s visual “chart of his military life,” Mah-to-toh-pa would point at the paintings on the back of the garment and dramatically re-enact the incidents depicted. As Wong has pointed out in her study of the robe, by combining the visual, oral, and performative, Mah-to-toh-pa constructed a vivid autobiographical narrative that did not rely on writing.

Native American naming practices could also serve as oral expressions of identity and personal development. Unlike Euro-Americans, Indians could acquire multiple names over a lifetime, taking one at



[9067] Anonymous, *Facsimile of an Indian Painting* (n.d.), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-28805].



[5917] George Catlin, *Wi-Jun-Jon—The Pigeon’s Egg Head Going to and Returning from Washington*, courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC2-3313].

birth, gaining others as a result of significant life events, and even keeping some secret. A new name would not necessarily replace earlier names but instead could exist in dynamic relation to them. Charles Alexander Eastman, for example, was assigned the name of “Hakadah,” or “The Pitiful Last,” because his mother died shortly after his birth. Later, when he performed admirably in a lacrosse game, he acquired the new name “Ohiyesa,” or “The Winner.” Eventually, he adopted the Anglicized name “Charles Alexander Eastman” at the request of his father, and then changed his title again when he received the degree of “Doctor.” Kiowa warrior Ohettoint had several Indian names and was known variously as “High Forehead,” “Charley Buffalo,” “Padai,” and “Twin.” Such naming practices were understandably confusing to white authorities who wanted to compile accurate lists of tribal members. To help resolve this cultural misunderstanding, Eastman worked for several years to assign Anglicized surnames to Sioux individuals, hoping that more “American” names would help them register with the U.S. government and thus claim property rights guaranteed to them by law. Unfortunately, this kind of enforced assimilation left little room for the important autobiographical work performed by traditional Indian names.

As Native American cultures came into contact with Euro-Americans, their autobiographical practices changed significantly. Materials such as commercial paint, paper, and colored pencils acquired by trade, gift, or capture provided new media for recording pictographs. In response to these new materials and the shortage of old materials such as buffalo hides, Indians began to record pictographic tribal histories (sometimes called “Winter Counts”) in partly used ledger books, army rosters, and daybooks acquired from whites. One unknown Cheyenne artist somehow acquired an envelope addressed in European script to “Commanding Officer, Company G, 2nd Cavalry” and used it as a canvas for his moving depiction of a courtship scene. In the pictograph, two lovers meet and then join each other in front of a tipi. Thus, the artist used the materials of the enemy’s army to construct his own expression of romantic connection. White Bull, a Teton Dakota chief, created a hybrid pictographic autobiography in a business ledger, using traditional visual symbols as well as printed words to tell his life story. Commissioned by a white collector who paid White Bull fifty dollars for his work, the ledger graphically presents the author’s genealogy and hunting and war record. White Bull portrays himself counting coup on an enemy warrior and interprets the image in script written in the Dakota language using the Dakota **syllabary**. By the nineteenth century, some tribes had developed scripts called syllabaries that included characters for their vowel and consonant sounds and thus enabled them to write in their own languages. First developed by Sequoyah for the Cherokee language, the syllabaries enabled the creation of hybrid Native American expressions. No longer visual or oral, texts written in syllabary adapted the Western technologies of writing to traditional Native American languages.



[6823] F. W. Greenough, Se-Quo-Yah [Sequoiah] (c. 1836), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZC4-4815].

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: What is “counting coup”?

Comprehension: What is a syllabary? How did syllabaries transform Native American autobiographical expression?

Comprehension: Why might a Native American have had multiple names?

Context: After publishing their autobiographical pieces, both Zitkala-Ša and Charles Alexander Eastman put together collections of translations of the traditional folktales they had heard as children. Why do you think these two acculturated Sioux people might have felt compelled to translate their culture’s stories into English and into print? What effect might this translation have on the stories?

Context: In his poetry and prose, Alexander Posey frequently celebrated the achievements of Sequoyah, the Cherokee who had invented the first syllabary for a Native American language. Why do you think Posey was so interested in the syllabary? What role did literacy play in his own work? How did Posey mediate between conventions of the English language and his desire to express authentic Native American speech patterns?

Exploration: What kinds of non-written expressions are important in American culture today? How do contemporary Americans engage in self-expression and self-narration through the use of non-written signs?

Exploration: How do Native American oral or pictorial autobiographical expressions compare to traditional Euro-American autobiography (Benjamin Franklin, or Henry Adams, for example)? How do they compare with early Native American autobiographical writings in English (Samson Occom or William Apess, for example)?

Exploration: To what extent are *Storyteller* by Leslie Marmon Silko and *The Way to Rainy Mountain* by N. Scott Momaday communio-oratory (or, community-life-speaking) rather than autobiographical? How do these very experimental works relate to the works of Charles Eastman and Zitkala-Ša?

Black, White, and Yellow: Coloring the News in Late-Nineteenth-Century America

Americans in the late nineteenth century had unprecedented access to news, both of their immediate neighborhoods and of the world, as print technology, literacy, and appetites for information exploded. By 1900, there were twenty daily newspapers in circulation for every one that had existed in 1850. Industrialized printing presses enabled publishers to put out periodicals more cheaply than ever before—at one or two cents a copy, some newspapers sold in the 1890s were six times cheaper than they had been at the beginning of the century. Even high quality magazines and monthly periodicals could be purchased for just a few pennies. The changes in the cost and distribution of American newspapers meant, by the end of the century, that national

“MOVING PICTURES” WEB ARCHIVE

[2044] N. C. Wyeth, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1919), courtesy of Reed College Library. Wyeth’s image of Chingachgook, father of Uncas, and friend of Hawkeye. Chingachgook’s knowledge of white culture allows him to better understand the Europeans and mirrors Natty’s understanding of Native American culture.

[5917] George Catlin, *Wi-Jun-Jon—The Pigeon’s Egg Head Going to and Returning from Washington*, courtesy of the Library of Congress. Wi-Jun-Jon’s tales about the wonders of the white man’s world were met with skepticism and distrust by members of his tribe. The Assiniboine chief was eventually murdered by one of his own tribesmen.

[6823] F. W. Greenough, *Se-Quo-Yah [Sequoiah]* (c. 1836), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZC4-4815]. Half-length portrait of Sequoyah, dressed in a blue robe, holding a tablet that shows the Cherokee alphabet.

[8102] Shirt of the Blackfeet Tribe (c. 1890), courtesy of the Portland Art Museum, gift of Elizabeth Cole Butler [86.126.32]. Shirts such as this one were worn during the Ghost Dance Movement. Clothing varied from tribe to tribe, but many felt that the shirts would protect wearers from bullets and attack.

[8106] Anonymous, *Girl’s dress* (c. 1890), courtesy of the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon. This *hoestôtse*, or Cheyenne dress, incorporates beadwork as a means of expression. This style was developed by the Kiowa in the mid-1800s and copied by other Plains tribes.

[8112] Anonymous, *Rawhide soled boots* (c. 1900), courtesy of the Portland Art Museum, gift of Elizabeth Cole Butler. Fringes and beadwork on moccasins and clothing displayed the skill of the maker, as well as the status and social location of the wearer.

[9067] Anonymous, *Facsimile of an Indian Painting* (n.d.), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-28805]. Paintings such as this one represent one of the ways that Native Americans recorded their perspectives on historical

events even after contact and the introduction of written history by European Americans.

and international news reached even poor and rural Americans. Newspapers brought the nation together.

Many of the writers featured in this unit began their careers as printers' apprentices and journalists. Bret Harte and Mark Twain met when they were writing for newspapers in California; Alexander Posey founded and edited the first newspaper owned by a Native American; Joel Chandler Harris published his first Uncle Remus stories while working for the *Atlanta Constitution* and had them syndicated in newspapers throughout the North. Other important nineteenth-century writers got their start or in some cases published the majority of their work in magazines and monthly periodicals. Charles W. Chesnutt, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Sarah Orne Jewett, Kate Chopin, and Zitkala-Ša all published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and a variety of other literary journals. Undoubtedly, the close affiliation between journalists and fiction writers in the nineteenth century influenced the development of realism as a literary style. Borrowing ideals of truth, objectivity, and accuracy from journalistic techniques, these writers helped formulate the dominant aesthetic in American letters in this period.

William Dean Howells, a pre-eminent practitioner of literary realism and the editor of *Harper's Monthly* magazine, pronounced that realism "is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material." For realists, this commitment to "truthfulness" often led them to explore characters, places, and events that had never before seemed appropriate subject matter for literature. Just as nineteenth-century newspapers democratized the news, realism democratized the scope of literature. The enfranchisement of "common" or "everyday" subject matter extended literary representation to ordinary people whom authors had previously ignored or romanticized. Perhaps influenced by their consumption of newspapers, American audiences evinced a new willingness to read about unrefined and even tragic or ugly subjects in the interest of gaining access to authentic accounts of the world around them. Journalistic coverage of the carnage and horror of the Civil War—an event that dramatically touched the lives of almost all Americans who lived through it—had exposed readers to realistic, if horrifying, depictions of actual events. As the stark photographs of the aftermath of Civil War battles featured in the archive make clear, these depictions could hardly fail to make a profound impression on readers and viewers. By the end of the century, journalism's aesthetic of truth and accuracy had found its way from the newspapers into the fiction of the country.

Unfortunately, the journalistic ideals that had such a powerful impact on American fiction did not always shape newspapers themselves. As the newspaper industry became big business—and as men like William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer amassed enormous fortunes through their creation of publishing empires—journalistic integrity sometimes took a back seat to a desire to boost circulation and please readers. New techniques designed to sell papers rather than to provide accurate coverage of events started to shape the look and feel of American newspapers. Novelties like giant banner headlines, color inserts, provocative cartoons, and large engravings put a focus



[6551] Kenyon Cox, *Columbia & Cuba—Magazine Cover—Nude Study* (1898), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-68463].

on visual appeal rather than substance. The content of stories, too, privileged sensational impact over objectivity or thoroughness, focusing on scandal and human-interest stories to the exclusion of important events. The term **yellow journalism** was coined in the 1890s to characterize this new trend in news reporting. Named for R. F. Outcault's popular comic strip, which featured a yellow-robed character named the "yellow kid," the term refers to the circulation war that arose between Hearst's *New York Journal* and Pulitzer's *New York World*. The competition began when Hearst, determined to lure readers from Pulitzer's paper, hired Outcault away from the *World* to draw for the *Journal*. Pulitzer responded by commissioning a new cartoonist to draw a second "yellow kid" comic. Soon, the war between the two largest New York newspapers became a competition between two "yellow kids," and the term "yellow journalism" was coined to describe the sensationalist, irresponsible journalistic tactics the papers adopted in their attempts to outsell one another.

The Sioux writer Charles Alexander Eastman learned first-hand the potentially devastating impact yellow journalism could have on already tense situations. When the Ghost Dance movement was gaining momentum on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Eastman hoped to diffuse the anxiety the spiritual movement caused in white reservation authorities by assuring them of the non-threatening nature of the dancers' activities. Instead, rumors of a possible Indian attack—rumors started mainly by irresponsible journalists—increased the white authorities' fears. Eastman lamented, "of course, the press seized upon the opportunity to enlarge upon the strained situation and predict an 'Indian uprising.' The reporters were among us, and managed to secure much 'news' that no one else ever heard of." The reporters' specious news stories fueled an already fraught situation that eventually culminated in the tragic massacre of 150 Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee in December 1890.

Yellow journalism also played a key role in the Spanish-American war, a conflict that has gone down in history as the first "media war." As the conflict between rebel Cubans and Spanish colonists escalated in Cuba in 1896, newspapers seized on the event as a chance to attract readers and increase their circulation. Dispatching the first "foreign war correspondents" to Cuba, the papers began printing inflammatory stories (often based on little or no evidence) about Spanish brutality and noble Cuban resistance. The papers commissioned some of the country's most popular artists to provide graphic illustrations of Spanish atrocities designed to whip the American public into a frenzy of outrage and war mongering. As *New York Journal* editor Hearst told artist Frederic



[6332] Archibald Gunn and Richard Felton Outcault, *New York Journal's Colored Comic Supplement* (1896), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZC4-2553].



[4219] Western Photograph Company, *Gathering up the dead at the battlefield of Wounded Knee, South Dakota* (1891), courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

**"BLACK, WHITE, AND
YELLOW" WEB ARCHIVE**

[1962] Timothy H. O'Sullivan, *Unfinished Confederate grave near the center of the battlefield of Gettysburg* [stereograph] (1863), courtesy of the Library of Congress, American Memory Collection [PR-065-793-22]. Photograph of dead Confederate soldiers in a shallow grave at Gettysburg. Journalistic coverage of the Civil War exposed readers to realistic depictions of actual events, paving the way for the aesthetic of truth and accuracy in American fiction.

[2818] Anonymous, *Refugees leaving the Old Homestead* (c. 1863), courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration [NWDNS-LC-CC-306]. This photograph shows a family of Civil War refugees ready to leave the homestead. To escape the Rebels, Union families would gather as much of their belongings as would fit on a wagon and head north.

[3228] Timothy O'Sullivan, *Incidents of the War. A Harvest of Death, Gettysburg, July, 1863*, courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-B8184-7964-A DLC]. Federal soldiers dead on the battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Graphic, bleak war photographs inspired postwar literary realism.

[4219] Western Photograph Company, *Gathering up the dead at the battlefield of Wounded Knee, South Dakota* (1891), courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution. U.S. soldiers standing in front of a wagon full of dead Sioux. A blizzard delayed the burial of the dead. Eventually the Sioux were buried in a mass grave, with little effort made to identify the bodies.

[5149] Kurz and Allison, *The Storming of Ft. Wagner* (1890), courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site. This illustration shows soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment leading the Union charge against the Confederate stronghold of Fort Wagner, South Carolina. The 54th Massachusetts was the first black regiment recruited in the North during the Civil War.

[5808] Barthelmess, *Buffalo soldiers of the 25th Infantry, Ft. Keogh, Montana* (1890), courtesy of the Library of

Remington, "You furnish the pictures, I'll furnish the war." The newspapers' strategy worked: circulation increased dramatically and the American public demanded armed intervention. By 1898, President McKinley had become convinced that his political party would suffer if he did not engage in war with Spain, however unjustified. While it may not be fair to hold the newspapers responsible for the war, it is accurate to say that the press fueled pro-war sentiment and that the outcome of American involvement in nineteenth-century Cuba might have been very different without the sensational headlines and distorted reporting provided by the yellow journalists.

As newspapers began to shape the values and style of American culture in the late nineteenth century, artist William Harnett began to produce canvases that served as visual essays on the new role of newspapers in American life. Between 1875 and 1890, he painted over sixty still-life representations of newspapers. Never painting readers, Harnett instead offered tableaux of newspapers on tables surrounded by glasses, books, and other reading accoutrements. Often featuring matches, candles, pipes, and even smoldering embers next to the papers, he highlighted their potential to catch fire—that is, their tendency to inflame delicate situations. The papers in Harnett's paintings are not readable—he represented news copy as illegible marks—perhaps commenting on the fact that the content of the stories had become secondary to the circulation of the paper. Despite the blurred print, Harnett's representations consistently tricked his viewers: guards had to be posted at his exhibitions to restrain viewers from trying to touch the canvases. His paintings, then, are a visual corollary to the realist aesthetic that shaped American fiction, even as they subtly hint at the problems with the journalistic techniques that spurred the realist movement.

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: What does the term "yellow journalism" mean and how did it get its name?

Comprehension: What kinds of strategies did "yellow" newspapers use to boost their circulation and appeal to readers?

Comprehension: What are the ideals of "realism" as a literary style? How are they related to journalistic ideals?

Context: Both Joel Chandler Harris and Alexander Posey reached their broadest audiences by publishing their dialect stories in newspapers. Why do you think newspaper readers were so interested in stories written in ethnic or regional dialect?

Context: Examine the headlines, banners, and color supplements featured in the archive. How are these images different from traditional newspaper presentations? To what kinds of readers are these images trying to appeal?

Context: In *The Awakening*, Mr. Pontellier uses the public newspaper as a device for communicating with his wife and for avoiding scandal. How does he manipulate news of his family and domestic circumstances in the newspaper? Why does he feel it is necessary to

offer public explanations of the family's domestic circumstances in the newspaper?

Exploration: Do you think “yellow journalism” is still a force in media coverage of the news in contemporary America? To what extent are the dual forces of realism and sentimentality still central to the art of journalism?

Exploration: How have twentieth- and twenty-first-century American military conflicts been shaped by media coverage? How do you think media coverage has shaped popular opinion either in favor of or in opposition to particular wars or military engagements?

Exploration: Today, many Americans get their news from sources other than printed newspapers. What other media have taken the place of newspapers in this country? How do these new media either lend themselves to or resist yellow journalism?

EXTENDED CONTEXTS

Monkeying Around: Trickster Figures and American Culture

Just like written literary traditions, oral storytelling traditions have genres and styles. The “trickster tale” is one of many genres of oral narrative tradition. The central figure in these tales is the “trickster,” usually depicted as an animal. Characterized by paradox, duality, cleverness, shape-shifting, duplicity, and a knack for survival, trickster figures are appealing in their ability to assert their individuality and shatter boundaries and taboos. From traditional African American folktales about Brer Rabbit, Brer Tortoise, and the Signifying Monkey to Native American fables about Coyote, Raven, and Iktomi the Spider, trickster tales have served as powerful cultural expressions of ethnic identity. For many groups, these tales functioned as a means of representing and commenting on the mixing and meeting of cultures and the power relations such meetings entail, since the flexibility and polyvalent qualities of the trickster make him a useful figure for articulating resistance to dominant groups or oppressive colonizers. Trickster figures continue to be central to American culture. One need only turn on the television on Saturday morning to see their influence: the weekly celebrations of Bugs Bunny's exploits and his clever victories over the well-armed and supposedly more powerful Elmer Fudd are clear indications of the enduring appeal of the trickster tradition to new generations of Americans.

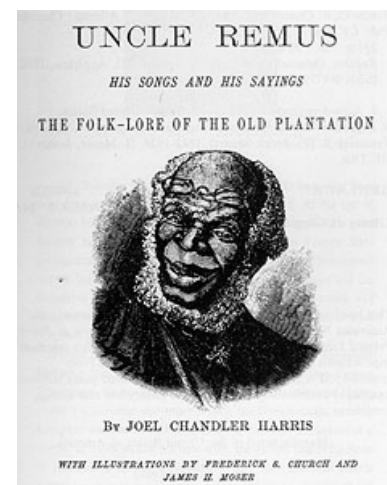
The trickster, by his very nature, is almost impossible to define. Because he is a master of dissolving boundaries, confounding certainties, and exploiting ambiguity, it is difficult to pin a clear description on him. As cultural critic Henry Louis Gates Jr. puts it in his influential study *The Signifying Monkey*:

A partial list of [the trickster's] qualities might include individuality, satire, parody, irony, magic, indeterminacy, open-endedness, ambigu-

Congress [LC-USZC4-6161 DLC]. In 1866, Congress approved six new cavalry and infantry regiments comprised solely of African American enlisted troops. Called Buffalo Soldiers by the Native Americans, these units performed the same frontier duties as their white counterparts and later served with distinction in the Spanish-American War.

[6332] Archibald Gunn and Richard Felton Outcault, *New York Journal's* colored comic supplement (1896), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZC4-2553]. This color poster from the comic pages of William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* features a woman in dancing costume with a rope around the popular comic character “Yellow Kid,” developed by artist Richard Felton Outcault.

[6551] Kenyon Cox, *Columbia & Cuba—Magazine Cover—Nude Study* (1898), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-68463]. An allegorical cover of an 1898 magazine, exemplifying the openness toward the human body of the late-nineteenth-century realists. The women's names, “Columbia” and “Cuba,” refer to an imagined relationship between the nations during the Spanish American War.



[1565] Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus* cover (c. 1880), courtesy of the University of Virginia.



[5735] A. B. Frost, *Brer B'ar Tied Hard en Fas* (1892), courtesy of Houghton Mifflin.

ity, sexuality, chance, uncertainty, disruption and reconciliation, betrayal and loyalty, closure and disclosure, encasement and rupture. But it is a mistake to focus on one of these qualities as predominant. Esu [the trickster] possesses all of these characteristics, plus a plethora of others which, taken together, only begin to present an idea of the complexity of this classic figure of mediation and of the unity of opposed forces.

Perhaps one of the most useful evocations of the trickster's complex identity is the African carving of Esu which presents him as having two faces—one at the front of his head and one at the back—thus highlighting his duality and ambiguity.

Traditional African American folktales celebrate the way the trickster's duplicity allows him to escape unscathed from even the most seemingly hopeless situations. Brer Rabbit's ability to outwit the more powerful animals Brer Fox and Brer Bear makes him an appealing hero. While literary critics disagree about the extent to which Joel Chandler Harris understood the deep ironies of the African American stories he transcribed in his *Uncle Remus* tales, Harris was able to see the cultural usefulness of Brer Rabbit's trickster qualities to enslaved African Americans. In the introduction to one of his *Uncle Remus* collections, he explains, "It needs no scientific investigation to show why he [the black] selects as his hero the weakest and the most harmless of all animals, and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf, and the fox." The manner in which these tales invert the roles of the powerful and the weak, so that the supposedly submissive figure cunningly outwits his powerful oppressor, offers a subversive moral that must have provided hope to oppressed slaves.

Native American trickster tales are similarly interested in the inversion of social norms and the breaking of boundaries; their tales of Coyote and other supernatural characters celebrate the trickster as simultaneously vulgar and sacred, wise and foolish, but always surviving. In Charles Alexander Eastman's transcription of the traditional Sioux tale of the trickster turtle, Turtle's strategies exactly parallel Brer Rabbit's. Just as Brer Rabbit uses reverse psychology to convince Brer Fox to throw him into a briar patch—the environment in which he is most comfortable—so does Turtle convince his captors to confine him in water, a fluid medium which of course allows him to escape. The identity of the trickster continues to resonate in Native American culture today. Harry Fonseca's playful paintings about Coyote testify to the figure's enduring cultural importance. Fonseca's representations of Coyote show him skillfully mediating between the "old



[2616] James Brown, *Dancing for Eels* (1848), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZC4-4542].

ways" and the new: in *Coyote in Front of Studio*, Coyote pairs a modern leather jacket and high-top sneakers with a traditional Plains Indian war bonnet and pipe bag. With two eyes on one side of his head, this Coyote embodies the duality and flexibility of contemporary

Indian culture, figuring both resistance and strategic accommodation to Euro-American culture.

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: What are some of the animals commonly chosen to represent trickster figures in African American and Native American traditional trickster tales? What qualities do these animals have in common?

Context: While *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* does not contain any traditional animal trickster figures, many of Huck's adventures resonate with trickster traditions. How does Twain draw on traditional trickster schemes and qualities in his narrative of Jim and Huck's journey down the river? Which characters in the novel seem most trickster-like?

Exploration: How do characters such as the Joker in *Batman*, or the Road Runner or Bugs Bunny in *Looney Tunes* draw on trickster traditions? How are they similar to figures like Brer Rabbit or Iktomi? How are they different? What kinds of cultural values do they seem to espouse?

The Human Framed: Anatomy, Photography, and Realism in Nineteenth-Century America

Viewing Thomas Eakins's masterful depiction of medical surgery in his painting *The Gross Clinic*, an art critic writing for the *New York Herald* in 1876 was both impressed and repelled by its stark realism: "The painting is decidedly unpleasant and sickeningly real in all its gory details, though a startlingly life-like and strong work." Showing the famous surgeon Dr. Samuel David Gross in the midst of an operation, with blood on his hands and an open incision in the patient on the table before him, Eakins's controversial painting has come to be recognized as a masterpiece of uncompromising **realism**. Like much late-nineteenth-century American literature, American art after the Civil War became increasingly interested in providing viewers with accurate, unromanticized depictions of modern life and the human condition. As *The Gross Clinic* makes vividly, even brutally, clear, the realists' commitment to depicting physical truth prompted them to paint features and aspects of the human body that had previously seemed outside the boundaries of artistic representation.

Eakins was fascinated by the muscles and mechanisms of the human body. He became interested in anatomy in high school and went on to study the subject extensively at both the Pennsylvania Academy and the Jefferson Medical College, where he regularly dissected corpses. He eventually supplemented his income as an artist by teaching anatomy and dissection. While Eakins admitted that he felt a natural aversion to dissecting human bodies, he saw the task as necessary to his art. As he put it, "One dissects simply to increase his knowledge of how beautiful objects are put together to the end that one

"MONKEYING AROUND" WEB ARCHIVE

[1565] Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus* cover (c. 1880), courtesy of the University of Virginia. Joel Chandler Harris's trickster tales that Uncle Remus narrates—with their subversive focus on the triumph of seemingly weak characters over their aggressors—are characterized by poetic irony and a subtle critique of oppression and prejudice.

[2616] James Brown, *Dancing for Eels* (1848), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZC4-4542]. This lithograph with watercolor features a scene from a mid-nineteenth-century play intended to depict New York "as it is." A dancing black man in tattered clothes maintains the interest of observers of all types—the young, old, white, black, poor, and wealthy.

[5735] A. B. Frost, *Brer B'ar Tied Hard en Fas* (1892), courtesy of Houghton Mifflin. Illustration of Brer Rabbit tying Brer B'ar to a tree, taken from Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus and His Friends: Old Plantation Stories, Songs, and Ballads with Sketches of Negro Character*. As trickster tales, the African American fables published by Harris contain a subtle critique of oppression.

[8008] Greg Sarris, Interview: "Coyote" (2002), courtesy of Annenberg/CBP and *American Passages*. Greg Sarris, author, professor of English, and Pomo Indian, discusses the trickster Coyote.

[8507] Charles Eastman, "Turtle Story" (1909), courtesy of *Wigwam Evenings, Sioux Folk Tales*. This collection of Sioux tales by Eastman and his wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman, contains twenty-seven Sioux narratives, including creation stories and animal legends.



[1577] Thomas Eakins, *The Agnew Clinic* (1889), courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Library, Schoenberg Center.



[3228] Timothy O'Sullivan, *Incidents of the War. A Harvest of Death, Gettysburg, July 1863*, courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-B8184-7964-A DLC].



[3230] Anonymous, *Confederate and Union dead side by side in trenches at Fort Mahone* (1865), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-B8171-3181].

might imitate them." Eakins put his extensive knowledge of the workings of the human body to use in all of his paintings, and especially in his series of representations of wrestlers, swimmers, boxers, and rowers in action.

Eakins and other realist painters found the new medium of photography enormously interesting, both because it enabled them to capture split-second moments of human movement and because it could allow them to try out various tableaux for their paintings. In 1885, photographer Eadweard Muybridge revolutionized both photography and the study of human and animal movement with his sequential pictures using stop-action shutters to capture details of motion too quick for the human eye. Originally hired by Leland Stanford, the governor of California, to settle a bet about the nature of a racehorse's gait, Muybridge developed a technique for photographing successive stages

of the animal's motion, revealing that at top speed the horse had all four feet off the ground mid-stride. Muybridge continued his photographic investigations at the University of Pennsylvania, where he collaborated with Eakins, who was also interested in photographing motion. He soon published *Animal Locomotion*, an eleven-volume collection of over 100,000 photographs of humans and animals running, climbing, and jumping which he intended to function as a kind of dictionary of bodily movement.

The realists' passion for uncompromising analyses and representations of the human body did not always meet with public approval. Photographs and paintings that struck viewers as too "graphic"—like Eakins's *Gross Clinic*—came in for harsh criticism. Eakins eventually lost his position at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts because he insisted that his students, both male and female, view nude human models in order to better understand the human body. The realists' unconventional openness toward the body and all of its features may have flown in the face of traditional American beliefs about propriety and respectability, but it succeeded in transforming the face of American art and culture. These late-nineteenth-century photographers and painters created the technology that soon led to the development of the motion picture camera, and they pioneered an aesthetic of truth and realism that had a profound and lasting effect on American art.

Unfortunately, nineteenth-century Americans' interest in the scientific study of the human form could also lead in dangerous directions when it was used to justify racism and prejudice. The late part of the century saw a new vogue for "phrenology," the pseudo-scientific study of facial features based on the premise that external appearance is a reliable indicator of internal character. Phrenology, which had been popular in the eighteenth century, was resurrected in the last decades of the nineteenth century when immigration was changing the complexion and features of the American face. Proponents of "racial purity" worried that the hundreds of thousands of non-Northern

European immigrants who were arriving yearly (Italians, Greeks, Eastern European Jews, Chinese, and others) would contaminate or weaken the American body. Commentators like Joseph Simms devised racist charts and diagrams designed to “scientifically” classify racial facial characteristics on the basis of intelligence, sensitivity, creativity, and morality. Simms’s book, *Physiognomy Illustrated; or, Nature’s Revelations of Character: A Description of the Mental, Moral, and Volitive Dispositions of Mankind, as Manifested in the Human Form and Countenance*, predictably argued for the superiority of Caucasian facial features. Such distortions of the spirit and integrity of scientific inquiry were a tragic corollary to the nineteenth-century commitment to studying the human form.

QUESTIONS

Comprehension: What kinds of subjects did realist painters like Thomas Eakins favor? What did they want their paintings to accomplish? What kinds of values are reflected in their work?

Context: What is happening in the operating theater in Eakins’s painting *The Agnew Clinic*? How does Eakins portray Dr. Agnew? What actions do his assistants perform? What parts of the patient are visible? Who do you think the woman is seated on the right? What is her role in the picture?

Context: Some Native American participants in the Ghost Dance religion came to believe that their spiritual practices would render their clothing impermeable to bullets. What kinds of views about the human body inform their beliefs? How does the Ghost Dancers’ understanding of the relationship between the spirit and the body compare to Euro-American realists’ understanding of physicality?

Exploration: If Eakins and Muybridge were alive today, what kinds of modern technology do you think would most interest them? Why?

ASSIGNMENTS

Personal and Creative Responses

1. *Journal:* Write a journal entry or short narrative in which you imagine Jim’s perspective on the final chapters of *Huckleberry Finn*, when Tom and Huck make a game out of Jim’s captivity and escape on the Phelps farm. How might Jim narrate these events differently than Huck does in the novel?
2. *Poet’s Corner:* Select a passage or poem written in dialect from one of the texts featured in this unit and translate it into “standard” English. What problems did you encounter in writing your translation? How does your translation change the meaning and effect of the passage?

“THE HUMAN FRAMED” WEB ARCHIVE

[1577] Thomas Eakins, *The Agnew Clinic* (1889), courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Library, Schoenberg Center. In this masterpiece of realist art, professor of surgery David Agnew lectures to a group of medical students while operating. As the Enlightenment overshadowed Calvinism in the nineteenth century, Americans put more faith in science. However, the seminars and clinics of higher education were reserved for male elites.

[3228] Timothy O’Sullivan, *Incidents of the War. A Harvest of Death, Gettysburg, July 1863*, courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-B8184-7964-A DLC]. Federal soldiers lie dead on the battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Lincoln’s speech commemorating the dead confirms that ending slavery was a northern war aim. Graphic, bleak war photographs such as this one inspired postwar literary realism.

[3230] Anonymous, *Confederate and Union dead side by side in trenches at Fort Mahone* (1865), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-B8171-3181]. Civil War photograph of the aftermath of the siege of Petersburg, depicting the body of a Confederate soldier lying a few feet away from the body of a Union soldier.

[3889] Thomas Eakins, *The Swimming Hole* (1884), courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. The homosocial nature of nineteenth-century male relations is reflected in this painting, which shows a group of students swimming while their headmaster (Eakins) swims nearby.

[5758] Thomas Eakins’s “Naked series”—old man, seven photographs (c. 1880), courtesy of the Getty Museum. The model in these photographs looks strikingly like Walt Whitman. Debate continues as to whether or not the image is indeed that of the poet “undisguised and naked.”

[6551] Kenyon Cox, *Columbia & Cuba—Magazine Cover—Nude Study* (1898), courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-68463]. An alle-

gorical cover of an 1898 magazine, exemplifying the openness toward the human body of the late-nineteenth-century realists. The names of the women, “Columbia” and “Cuba,” refer to an imagined relationship between the nations during the Spanish American War.

[8244] Eadweard Muybridge, *Animal Locomotion* (c. 1887), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-103037]. Muybridge’s innovative photographic techniques revolutionized the study of animal and human movement.

[8245] Eadweard Muybridge, *The Zoopraxiscope—A Couple Waltzing* (c. 1893), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC4-7690]. Known as “the father of the motion picture,” Muybridge invented the zoopraxiscope, which projected a moving image from still sequences, such as this couple dancing.

[8251] Pendelton’s Lithography, Dr. Spurzheim—*Divisions of the Organs of Phrenology Marked Externally* (1834), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZC4-4556]. The pseudo-science of phrenology was revived in the late nineteenth century and was often used to provide a “factual” basis for racism.

[8252] Anonymous, *The Symbolical Head, Illustrating all the Phrenological Developments of the Human Head* (1842), courtesy of the Library of Congress [LC-USZ62-100747]. The late nineteenth century saw a renewed interest in phrenology, the study of facial features as indicators of qualities such as intelligence, creativity, and morality. Most late-nineteenth-century phrenological studies purported to prove that Caucasian features were superior.

3. *Journal*: Imagine you are a reporter stationed at the Sioux Pine Ridge reservation in the 1890s. Compose your own newspaper account of the Ghost Dance religion for publication in a newspaper geared to an audience of white settlers. How will you describe this spiritual movement? What aspects of the religion will you emphasize?
4. *Artist’s Workshop*: Imagine you have won the lottery and are in the process of designing your dream house. Draw a floor plan for your ideal home. What rooms will you designate for specific activities? How large will you make the rooms? Will any of the rooms serve purposes similar to those served by the parlor in nineteenth-century homes?
5. *Multimedia*: Thomas Eakins believed that artists should represent the world as it is, not as they would like it to be. Using the *American Passages* archive and slide-show software, create a multimedia presentation in which you explore the influence of this realist ideal on some of the texts and contexts featured in this unit.

Problem-Based Learning Assignments

1. Imagine you and your peers serve on the curriculum committee at your high school or college. A group of parents, students, and teachers has recently circulated a petition to remove *Huckleberry Finn* from the school’s reading lists and library because of its racist language and offensive representations of African Americans. Other parents, students, and teachers have sent in letters insisting that the novel is a literary masterpiece and demanding that it continue to be taught at your school. Your committee is going to hold a community meeting to decide the issue. Take a side in the debate and prepare a presentation to articulate your point of view. How will you make your argument for or against *Huckleberry Finn*? What kind of evidence will you cite to support your claim for either the book’s educational value or its inappropriateness? How will you construct your argument so it will address the concerns of parents and teachers as well as students?
2. The Native Americans at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota have decided to sue the government agents and missionaries who insist on taking young Indian children to mission schools and boarding schools at which they are forced to practice Euro-American customs. The Pine Ridge Indians have hired you as their legal team. How will you prepare your prosecution of the government and missionaries? What kinds of evidence will you use in the case? Whom will you call as witnesses?

GLOSSARY

Boston marriage The nineteenth-century term used to describe two women who shared a household in a marriagelike arrangement.

Women involved in “Boston marriages” lived independently of men and drew emotional and material support from one another. It is not clear whether all or most “Boston marriages” involved sexual relationships—some probably did and others probably did not. In any case, couples like Sarah Orne Jewett and Annie Fields certainly found important companionship and support in their intense bond with one another.

coup counting A common Native American practice of making a historical record of an individual warrior’s feats of bravery. Each time he touched an enemy in battle, either with his hand or with a special “coup stick,” a Native American warrior acquired prestige and power—and the right to brag about his military successes.

dialect A unique, regional variant of a language in which pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary diverge from standard conventions. Many regionalist writers became accomplished at transcribing the authentic rhythms and idioms of local dialect in their efforts to make their characters’ dialogue mimic as closely as possible the way people really talked. Literalized, phonetic spellings forced readers to pronounce words as speakers of a regional dialect would pronounce them.

Ghost Dance A Native American response to Euro-American encroachments on their land and way of life. A powerful apocalyptic vision of the overthrow of white domination and a return to traditional Native American ways, the Ghost Dance sparked a pan-Indian, intertribal movement that frightened white authorities with its intensity. Started by the Paiute prophet Wovoka, who believed himself to be a Messianic figure, the Ghost Dance involved adopting traditional clothing and customs, singing and chanting traditional songs, and participating in a trance-inducing round dance designed to inspire dead Indian ancestors to return and reclaim their land. The movement ended tragically when white authorities killed 150 Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee for their involvement in the Ghost Dance religion.

parlor In nineteenth-century homes, parlors were formal rooms set aside for social ceremonies such as receiving guests or hosting tea parties. Many Americans believed that parlors enabled them to enjoy the refinement and comfort of respectable family living. Designed for display, the parlor was generally the “best room” in the house and usually contained furnishings and knick-knacks that cost more than the objects in the house that were intended for everyday use.

pictographic narrative Symbols, totems, and emblems which can convey expressions of personal and group identity as well as spiritual or military experiences. In some Native American tribes, this symbolic language was so highly evolved that individuals could “read” about one another by examining the pictures on robes, tipis, and shields without needing any accompanying oral explanation.

realism A new commitment to the truthful, accurate representation of American life as it was experienced by ordinary Americans infused literature with a “realist” aesthetic in the last half of the nineteenth century. Realism was characterized by its uncompromising, lit-

eral representations of the particularities of the material world and the human condition. This passion for finding and presenting the truth led many American practitioners of realism to explore characters, places, and events that had never before seemed appropriate subject matter for literature.

regionalism An expression of the realist aesthetic, regionalism emphasized the particularities of geographic settings, evoking the distinctive customs, speech, and culture of specific regions of the United States. This attention to the peculiarities of place flourished after the Civil War, perhaps as a celebration of the new unification of a country long divided by political, racial, and religious differences. Regional realism may also have developed in response to the rapid post war industrialization and homogenization that was destroying older, traditional ways of life. By chronicling the specific details of regional culture, regional realism preserved a record of ways of life and habits of speech that were suddenly in danger of disappearing as a result of the newspapers, railroads, and mass-produced consumer goods that were standardizing American culture and taste.

syllabary First developed by Sequoyah for the Cherokee language, syllabaries were written scripts that included characters for the vowel and consonant sounds of individual Native American languages. Syllabaries enabled some Native Americans to write in their own languages.

trickster Usually depicted as an animal, the “trickster” is a recurring figure in human cultures. Characterized by paradox, duality, cleverness, shape-shifting, duplicity, and a knack for survival, trickster figures seem to be universally appealing in their ability to assert their individuality and shatter boundaries and taboos. From traditional African American folktales about Brer Rabbit, Brer Tortoise, and the Signifying Monkey to Native American fables about Coyote, Raven, and Iktomi the Spider, trickster tales have served as powerful cultural expressions of ethnic identity.

yellow journalism A term coined in the 1890s to describe the sensationalist, irresponsible journalistic tactics the papers adopted in their attempts to outsell one another. Such tactics included reporting false or embellished stories, reporting only one side of a controversy, and using visual novelties such as banner headlines and color inserts to attract readers.

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