American Literature ~ 2nd Semester

Regionalists

American Realism & Naturalism 1865 ~ 1914
From End of Civil War to Beginning of World War One
The Two Major Forces of this Era: (1) Industrialism & (2) Darwinism

Industrialization
The Passing of the Frontier
- Railroads connecting cities
- Cattle drives ceasing
- Buffalo destroyed
- Western Indians subjugated
The Coming of Modern Transportation
- Railroad
- Automobile
- Airplane

Difficulties within the Nation
- Reconstruction after Civil War
- Political & Financial Scandals
The Increased New Technology and Abundant Resources Results
- Population shifts from the country to the cities
- Mass immigration from abroad
- Huge businesses (monopolies)
- Desire for individual wealth

Darwinism
Charles Darwin's basic statement: An animal species is able to transform into a different animal species. Animals are not fixed as unchangeable species.
- The Bible in Genesis 1:25: and God made the animals after their own kind
Accepted by the scientific community
- They wanted to throw out the Biblical account of creation and they called it a myth
- They wanted to rest on Man's Reason
- They abandoned the principle of the Scientific Method which is to observe and test theories before accepting them as scientific facts
  - Observable Science does NOT support evolution
  - Observable Science DOES support Natural Selection
  - Natural Selection is NOT the same thing as Evolution
Evolutionary thinking was extended into every other discipline
The religious community capitulated to Darwinism. Rather than defend God's Word, they began to reason away the literal sense of God's Word.

Impact of the Two Major Forces on Christianity
Agnostics - We cannot know if there is a God & it doesn't really matter
Atheists - Believe there is no God
Liberals & Modernists - Denied the foundational truths of Christianity while trying to keep some sort of religion
- Created what amounted to a new religion with these tenets:
  - God is the Father of all men
  - All men are brothers
  - All religions are true (They believe that all religions essentially point to the same god)
  - Man is not a sinner
  - The Bible is not inspired (Bible is just a work of classic literature)
  - Christ is not the Son of God (Jesus was a really great guy! Good philosopher like Confucius or Aristotle)
  - Salvation is not an individual matter but a communal one
  - Society is the Source of Evil (Transcendentalism won this battle)
The "New Religion" gave rise to the Social Gospel Movement - Change society to improve mankind, ignoring man's sin nature

Impact of the Two Major Forces on American Literature
Dominated by Realism - presenting the world as you believe it is and NOT as you wish it would be or as it once was
Regionalists - transitions between Romantics & Realists
Master Realists - wrote about what they saw in the world
- One's view of what is "real" depends on your view of the world
Naturalists - applied Darwinism to literature
**Bret Harte**
The Father of the Modern Short Story - in particular the Western Short Story
Techniques: Surprise Endings, Humor, Unexpected Turns, Dialects
The Boom in the Calaveras Clarion

**Ambrose Bierce**
Lesser known Western writer who emphasized pessimism, bleakness, disillusionment, and death
First writer of "Black Humor" (things never turn out right)
An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

**Sidney Lanier**
The Southern Poet - His poetry is more Romantic than Realistic
In the Civil War, served as a Confederate & imprisoned by the union where he contracted tuberculosis
The Revenge of Hamish
The Song of the Chattahoochee
A Ballad of the Trees and the Master

**Hamlin Garland**
Midwest Short Story Writer
Realistic view of farm life rather than Idealistic - showed harsh realities and hard work of farm life
- Veritism - the term he used for his style of Realism - truthful and realistic yet hopeful
  - Veritas = Latin word for Truth
- He rejected the pessimistic realism of many writers
The Return of a Private

**James Whitcomb Riley**
A Poet of the Midwest - Very Famous!
He was famous for being a prankster! :-D
Called: *The Poet of the Common People* *The Hoosier Poet* *The Children's Poet*
Known for Hoosier dialect of his home state of Indiana
Cheerful, witty, folksy, happy, simple virtues
When the Frost is on the Punkin

**Sarah Orne Jewett**
Short Story writer & novelist of New England - Maine
Strongly Influenced by her father
Focused on Character Development rather than Plot or Setting
A White Heron

**Emily Dickinson**
New England Poet
Wrote 2,000 poems - only seven published during her lifetime
Known for her eccentric behavior:
- wore white exclusively after unknown traumatic event
- talked with friends while sitting behind door
Had nervous breakdown, became confined to bed, and died after two years
Regional, yet Universal style
Dickinson’s influence signals beginning of Modern American Poetry
Her poems have encouraged Modern Poets to:
- Experiment with language and form
- Express their doubt, irreverence, bitterness, and even outright rebellion

**Emily Dickinson**
Poems Dealing with the Poet's Self
Prologue
I'm Nobody! Who Are You?
Much Madness Is Divinest Sense
Success
Aspiration
I Never Saw a Moor
The Power of Imagination
A Word
To Make a Prairie It Takes a Clover
Hope
A Book
The Railway Train
Glimpses of Nature
She Sweeps with Many-Colored Brooms
The Snake
Simplicity
The Poet & Death
I Never Lost as Much but Twice
Presentiment Is That Long Shadow...
The Bustle in the House