

Aula 6

THE RISE OF REALISM

META

Apresentar o Realismo norte-americano, levando em conta o contexto sócio-histórico da época, bem como as implicações culturais da guerra civil.

OBJETIVOS

Ao final desta aula, o aluno deverá:
Compreender o Realismo Norte-Americano como uma manifestação específica de um movimento mais geral, surgido na Europa e espalhado para o resto do mundo;
Reconhecer e identificar os principais aspectos da literatura norte-americana produzida nesse período.

PRÉ-REQUISITOS

Familiaridade com os períodos formativos da literatura inglesa;
Conceitos-chave da Teoria da Literatura e da história literária.

Luiz Eduardo Oliveira

INTRODUÇÃO

The U.S. Civil War (1861-1865) between the industrial North and the agricultural and slave-owning South was maybe the most important historical episode in the history of the United States during the nineteenth century. If before the war idealists championed human rights and the abolition of slavery, after the war North-Americans began to idealize progress and the so called “self-made man”. It gave birth to an era of manufacturers and speculators. Business increased after the war. Natural resources like iron, coal, oil, gold and silver, were explored and manufactured. A new intercontinental rail system, inaugurated in 1869, and the transcontinental telegraph, which began operating in 1861, gave industry access to materials, markets, and communications. The constant influx of immigrants provided a strong supply of inexpensive labor.

With the growth of industrialization and urbanization, many problems began to appear: overcrowded housing, unsanitary conditions, low pay, difficult working conditions and restraints on business. Labor unions grew and strikes brought the claims of the working people to national awareness. Farmers, I turn, began to struggle against the bankers. The development of the country, after the war, was so fast that from 1860 to 1914 the United States, from an agricultural ex-colony, became one of the most powerful industrial nations of the world. By the end of the World War I, the country had become a world power.

DESENVOLVIMENTO

Besides the canonical writers of the period, like **Mark Twain** or **William Faulkner**, Many women writers appeared during this time: **Mary Wilkins Freeman** (1852-1930), **Harriet Beecher Stowe** (1811-1896) and **Sarah Orne Jewett** (1849-1909). All regions of the country seemed to celebrate themselves in writing influenced by local color. Some of them included social protest, racial injustice and inequality between the sexes.



Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), better known by his pen name, Mark Twain, was an American writer, humorist, entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer. Among his novels are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), the latter being considered “The Great American Novel”. Fonte: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Twain#/media/File:Mark_Twain_by_AF_Bradley.jpg



William Cuthbert Faulkner (1897-1962) was an American writer and Nobel Prize laureate from Oxford, Mississippi. Faulkner wrote novels, short stories, a play, poetry, essays, and screenplays. He is primarily known for his novels and short stories set in the fictional Yoknapatawpha County, based on Lafayette County, Mississippi, where he spent most of his life. Fonte: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6d/Carl_Van_Vechten_-_William_Faulkner.jpg



Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930) was a prominent 19th-century American author. Fonte: https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/freeman/mary_eleanor_wilkins/portrait.jpg

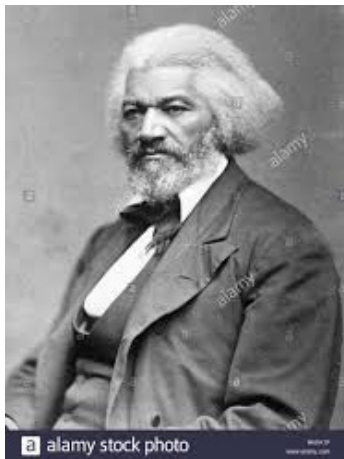


Harriet Elisabeth Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) was an American abolitionist and author. She came from the Beecher family, a famous religious family, and is best known for her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), which depicts the harsh conditions for enslaved African Americans. The book reached millions as a novel and play, and became influential in the United States and Great Britain, energizing anti-slavery forces in the American North, while provoking widespread anger in the South. Stowe wrote 30 books, including novels, three travel memoirs, and collections of articles and letters. She was influential for both her writings and her public stances on social issues of the day. Fonte: <https://blogs.baylor.edu/armstrongbrowning/files/2014/03/harriet-beecher-stowe-2ejoj3l.jpg>



Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) was an American novelist, short story writer and poet, best known for her local color works set along or near the southern seacoast of Maine. Jewett is recognized as an important practitioner of American literary regionalism. Fonte: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/Sarah_Orne_Jewett_7.jpg

There was also the rise of black North-American literature, for the writings of **Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Charles Waddell Chesnut, Paul Laurence Dunbar** and others became known to the public with their autobiographies and protest poetry. It is important to know that they all had an important precursor in **Frederick Douglass**.



Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) was an African-American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York, gaining note for his dazzling oratory and incisive antislavery writings. In his time, he was described by abolitionists as a living counter-example to slaveholders' arguments that slaves lacked the intellectual capacity to function as independent American citizens. Northerners at the time found it hard to believe that such a great orator had once been a slave. Fonte: <http://c8.alamy.com/comp/HN1K1F/frederick-douglass-1818-1895-african-american-social-reformer-about-HN1K1F.jpg>



Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856-1915) was an American educator, author, orator, and advisor to presidents of the United States. Between 1890 and 1915, Washington was the dominant leader in the African-American community. Fonte: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1b/Booker_T_Washington_retouched_flattened-crop.jpg



William Edward Burghardt “W. E. B.” Du Bois (1868-1963) was an American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer and editor. Born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, Du Bois grew up in a relatively tolerant and integrated community. After completing graduate work at the University of Berlin and Harvard, where he was the first African American to earn a doctorate, he became a professor of history, sociology and economics at Atlanta University. Du Bois was one of the co-founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Fonte: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/12/WEB_DuBois_1918.jpg/1200px-WEB_DuBois_1918.jpg



James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938) was an American author, educator, lawyer, diplomat, songwriter, and civil rights activist. Johnson is best remembered for his leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he started working in 1917. In 1920 he was the first African American to be chosen as executive secretary of the organization, effectively the operating officer. He served in that position from 1920 to 1930. Johnson established his reputation as a writer, and was known during the Harlem Renaissance for his poems, novels, and anthologies collecting both poems and spirituals of black culture. Fonte: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/d1/78/1f/d1781f36fd57b60db0154c3000391c9a.jpg>



Charles Waddell Chesnutt (1858-1932) was an African-American author, essayist, political activist and lawyer, best known for his novels and short stories exploring complex issues of racial and social identity in the post-Civil War South. Many families of free people of color were formed in the colonial and early Federal period; some attained education and property; in addition there were many mixed-race slaves, who as freedmen after the war were part of the complex society of the South. Two of his books were adapted as silent films in 1926 and 1927 by the African-American director and producer Oscar Micheaux. Following the Civil Rights Movement during the 20th century, interest in the works of Chesnutt were revived. Several of his books were published in new editions, and he received formal recognition. A commemorative stamp was printed in 2008. Fonte: https://www.biography.com/.image/t_share/MTE1ODA0OTcxNTg1NjAzMDg1/charles-waddell-chesnutt-wc-9246336-1-402.jpg



Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) was an American poet, novelist, and playwright of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Born in Dayton, Ohio, to parents who had been enslaved in Kentucky before the American Civil War, Dunbar began to write stories and verse when still a child and was president of his high school's literary society. He published his first poems at the age of 16 in a Dayton newspaper. Fonte: <https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-ekbkQNIDP9Y/VyCpzHcXNVI/AAAAAAAAAJj0/vM4Ymr9H8NAeBA5nOjgmvcFrrQjWIFjrwCLcB/s1600/Dunbar1.jpg>

But no literary work had the importance of **Uncle Tom's Cabin** (1852), by Harriet Beecher Stowe, the successful best-selling novel of the 19th century and the second best-selling book of the century, following the Bible. There are many stories about the novel. One of them is that it helped the abolitionist cause in the 1850s inspired the civil war. In the first year after it was published, 300.000 copies of the book were sold only in the United States. In 1855, three years after it was published, it was called “the most popular novel of our day”. One of the stories say that **Abraham Lincoln** met Stowe at the start of the Civil War supposedly told her: “So this is the little lady who started this great war”. The book, plays, films and even soap operas it inspired – including one Brazilian soap opera, *A Cabana do Pai Tomás* (1969), popularized many stereotypes about black people, which included the dark-skinned “mammy”; the “pickaninny” and the “Uncle Tom”, a dutiful, long-suffering servant faithful and obedient to his white master or mistress. It became a curse among the black African-Americans. Unfortunately, the negative associations with **Uncle Tom's Cabin** have overshadowed its historical impact as an antislavery manifesto.



Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was an American politician and lawyer who served as the 16th President of the United States from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865. Lincoln led the United States through its Civil War—its bloodiest war and perhaps its greatest moral, constitutional, and political crisis. In doing so, he preserved the Union, paved the way to abolition of slavery, strengthened the federal government, and modernized the economy. Fonte: <http://c8.alamy.com/comp/BFJ7X0/abraham-lincoln-1809-1865-16th-president-of-the-usa-BFJ7X0.jpg>



A Cabana do Pai Tomás foi uma telenovela brasileira produzida e exibida pela Rede Globo entre 7 de julho de 1969 e 28 de fevereiro de 1970, às 19 horas, com Sérgio Cardoso e Ruth de Souza. Fonte: https://i.ytimg.com/vi/692KBZQ_iag/hqdefault.jpg

Stowe, a Connecticut-born teacher and an active abolitionist, wrote the novel as a response to the passage of the second Fugitive Slave Act (1850). According to her biographers, she was inspired by the slave autobiographic narrative *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself* (1849). When Stowe's book became a best-seller, Henson republished his autobiography as *The Memoirs of Uncle Tom* and traveled on lecture tours through the United States and Europe. *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*, by Theodore Dwight Weld

and the Grimké sisters, was also a source for Stowe. The author herself mentioned a number of literary influences for her novel in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853). *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published at first in an abolitionist periodical in 1851. In the middle of the decade, it was already translated into many languages.

Read the following poem:

The Slave's Dream Longfellow - Poems on Slavery (1842)

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.
Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.
He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand!--
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.
And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.
Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.
At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds

Beside some hidden stream;
 And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
 Through the triumph of his dream.
 The forests, with their myriad tongues,
 Shouted of liberty;
 And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
 With a voice so wild and free,
 That he started in his sleep and smiled
 At their tempestuous glee.
 He did not feel the driver's whip,
 Nor the burning heat of day;
 For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
 And his lifeless body lay
 A worn-out fetter, that the soul
 Had broken and thrown away!

CONCLUSÃO

Many critics have suggested that there is no distinction between Realism and Naturalism. In fact, as some literary historians have pointed out, the term “realism” is used differently in European contexts. It seems that whatever was new between the 1870s and 1880s, could be designated as Realism, while those Works produced at the turn of the century could be called Naturalism. Thus, their meaning depends on the context they were used.

In North-American literary history, the term “realism” encompasses the period of time from the Civil War to the turn of the century. After the Civil War, with the increase of democracy and literacy, the growth in industrialism and urbanization, as well as of the population, due to immigration, a new Reading public formed by the middle class, was apt to consume and read the new realistic novels and short stories.

Main characteristics

- Selective presentation of reality with an emphasis on verisimilitude, even at the expense of a well-made plot
- Character is more important than action and plot; complex ethical choices are often the subject.
- Characters appear in their real complexity of temperament and motive; they are in explicable relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their own past.
- Class is important; the novel has traditionally served the interests and aspirations of an insurgent middle class.

- Events will usually be plausible. Realistic novels avoid the sensational, dramatic elements of naturalistic novels and romances.
- Diction is natural vernacular, not heightened or poetic; tone may be comic, satiric, or matter-of-fact.
- Objectivity in presentation becomes increasingly important: overt authorial comments or intrusions diminish as the century progresses.
- Interior or psychological realism a variant form.



RESUMO

Broadly defined as “the faithful representation of reality”, or, in Aristotelian terms, “verissimilitude”, realism is a literary technique practiced by many nineteenth century writers. Although strictly speaking, realism is a technique, it also means a specific kind of subject matter, especially the representation of middle-class life. It is also a reaction against Romanticism and it is characterized by an interest in scientific method, the systematizing of the study of documentary history and the influence of rational philosophy. One aspect which is relevant in North-American Realism is the political influence exerted by the Civil War and the questioning of slavery.



ATIVIDADES

Read the poem above carefully and try to describe its content, observing the way it was composed – the use of rhyme and rhythm, for example. Write a text of your own, using at least one paragraph.

COMENTÁRIO SOBRE AS ATIVIDADES

Esta atividade tem por finalidade principal de familiarizar o estudante com a linguagem poética de língua inglesa, exercitando sua capacidade de análise e interpretação.



PRÓXIMA AULA

A cultura contemporânea em questão

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