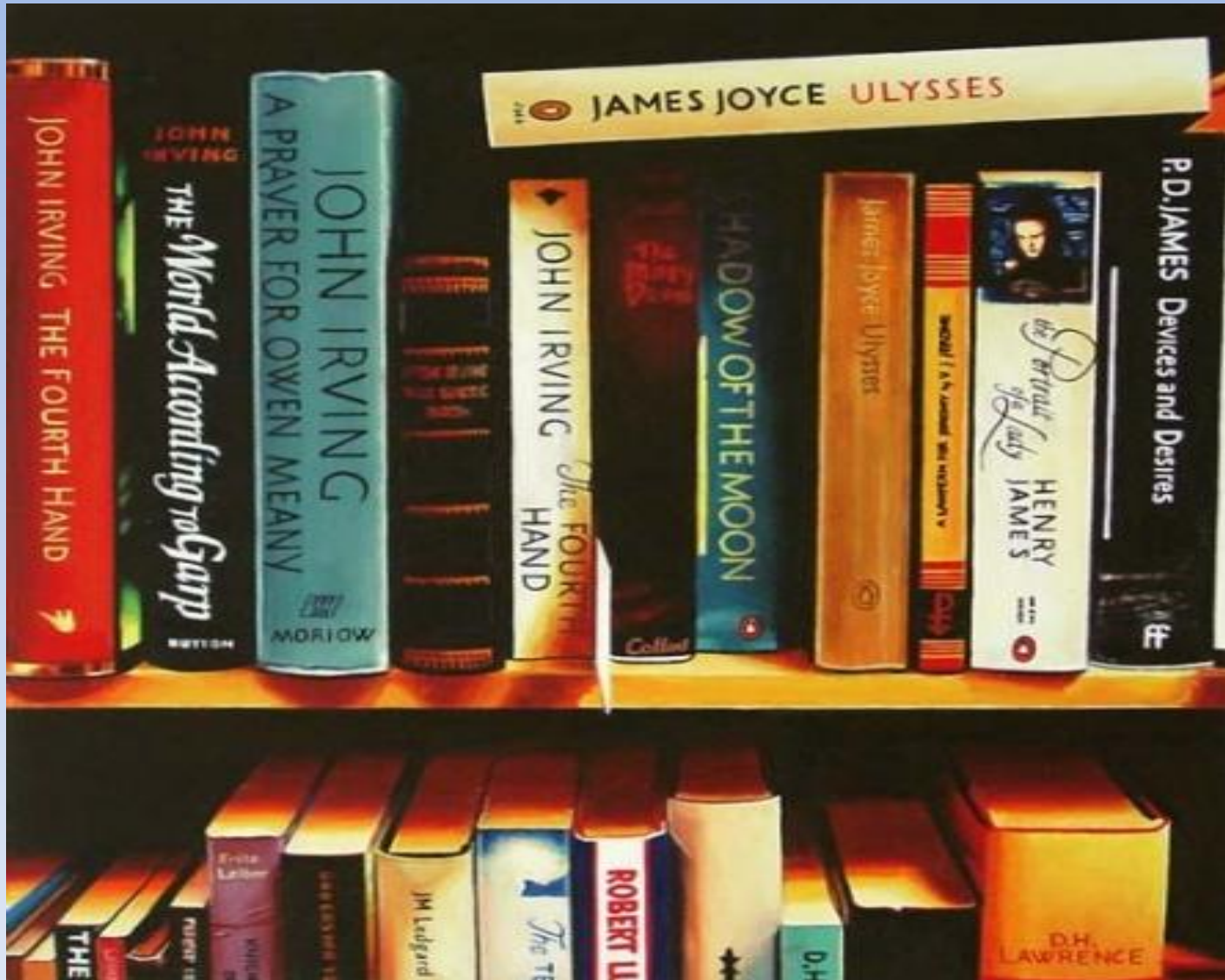


# Realism in American literature



The period of American literature known as Realism is generally considered to span from the end of the Civil War until the beginning of World War I.



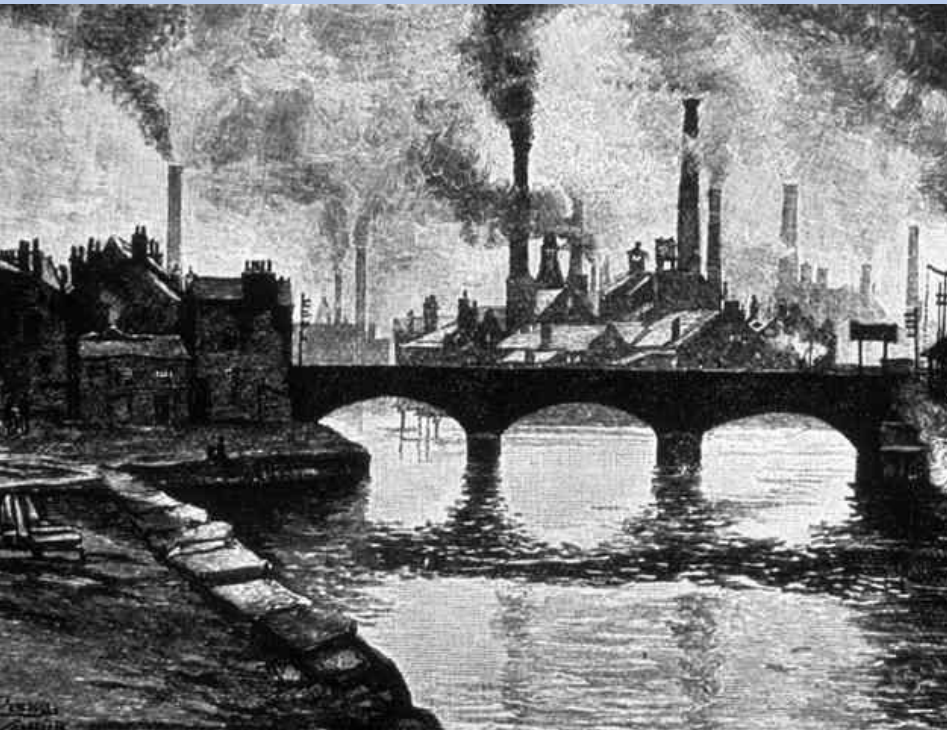
Emblems of Valor Version 1

1862



# Reasons for emergence of realism

- ★ The end of slavery
- ★ The industrial revolution



- ★ Increased urbanization
- ★ Increased poverty

American Realists sought to depict the relationship between the individual and society.





Realistic writers set their stories in specific American regions, rushing to capture the "local color" before it was lost.



CAPTURE AND BURNING OF WASHINGTON BY THE BRITISH, IN 1814.



Courtesy of California State Library

# FEATURES OF PLOT AND CHARACTERS

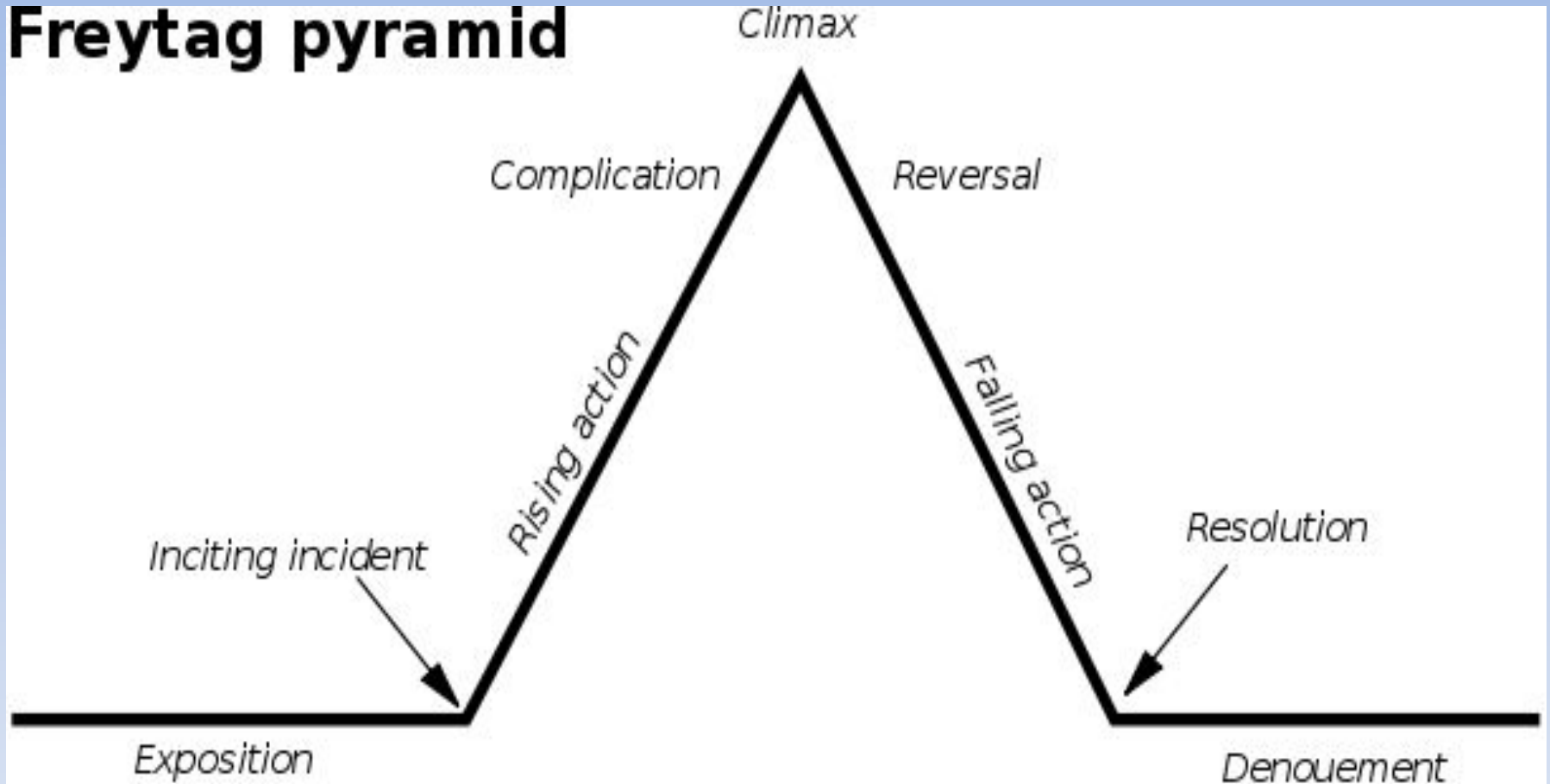
- ★ Character is more important than action and plot.
- ★ The novel has traditionally served the interests and aspirations of an insurgent middle class.
- ★ Realism is viewed as a realization of democracy.
- ★ Events will usually be plausible.



# Structure of prose

Objectivity in presentation becomes increasingly important: overt authorial comments or intrusions diminish as the century progresses.

## **Freytag pyramid**




The use of symbolism is controlled and limited; the realists depend more on the use of images.

## Some Realistic Authors



- Mark Twain




- Joseph Kirkland

- William Dean Howells



- E. W. Howe




- Rebecca Harding Davis



- Hamlin Garland

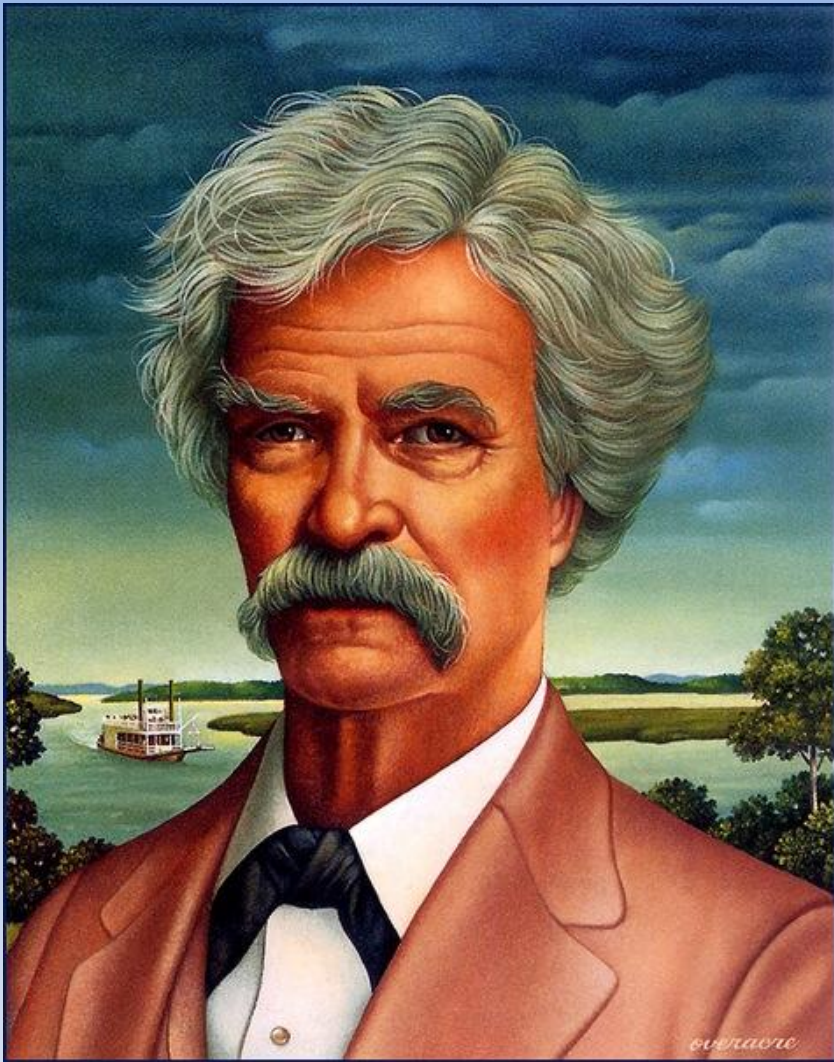
- John W. DeForest



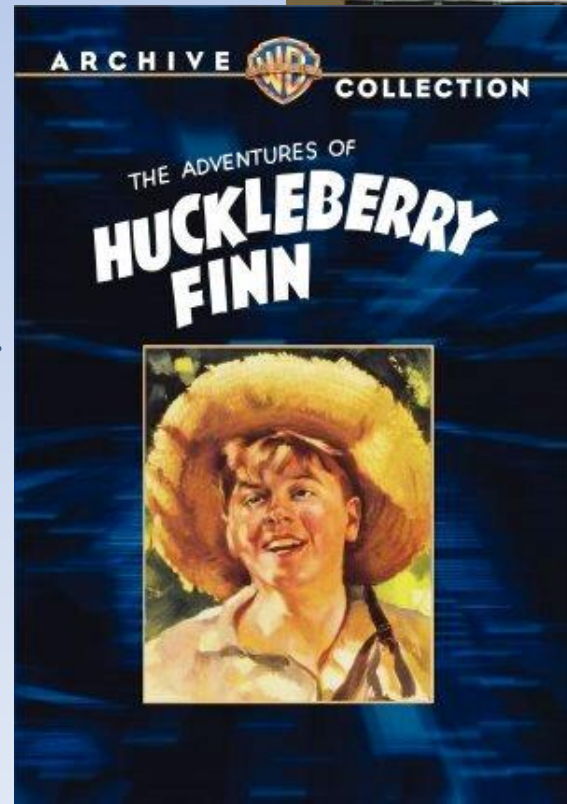
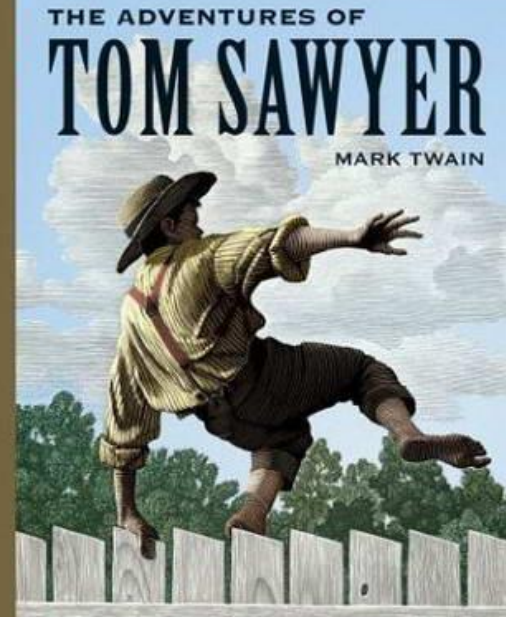
- Henry James

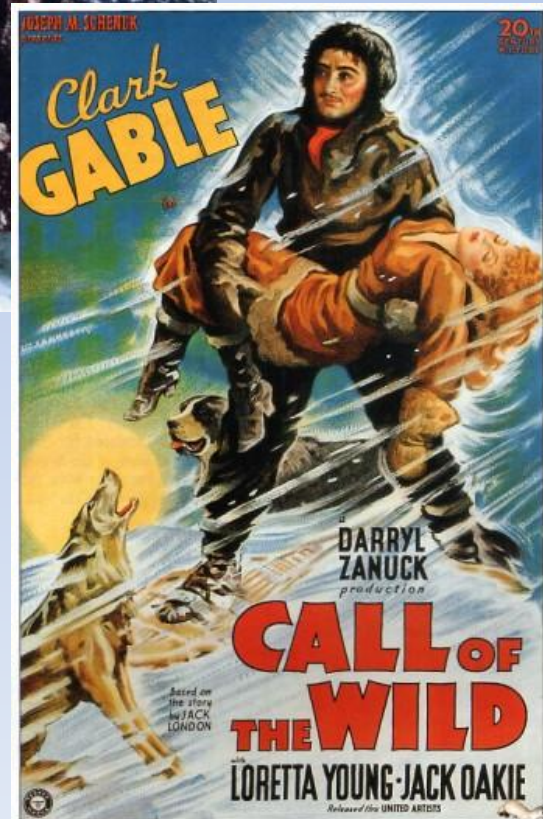
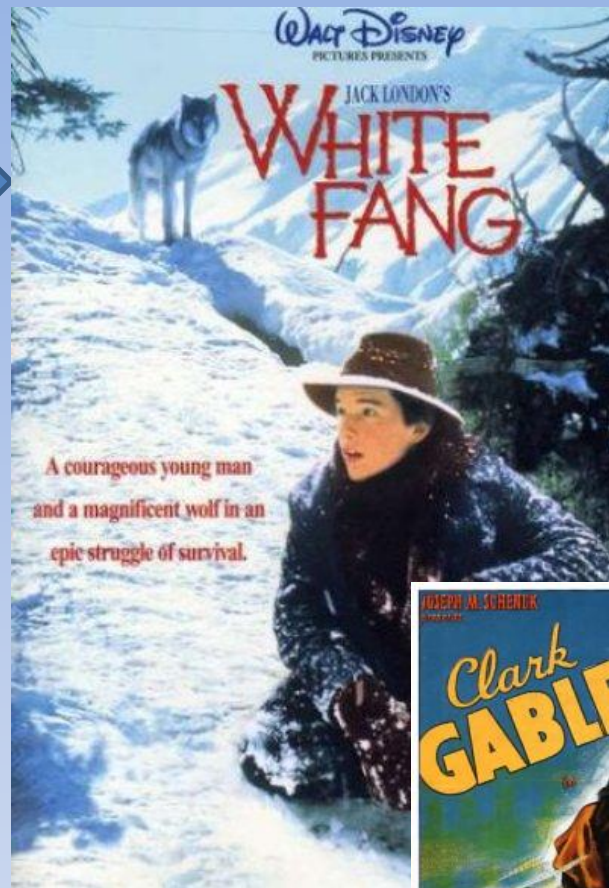






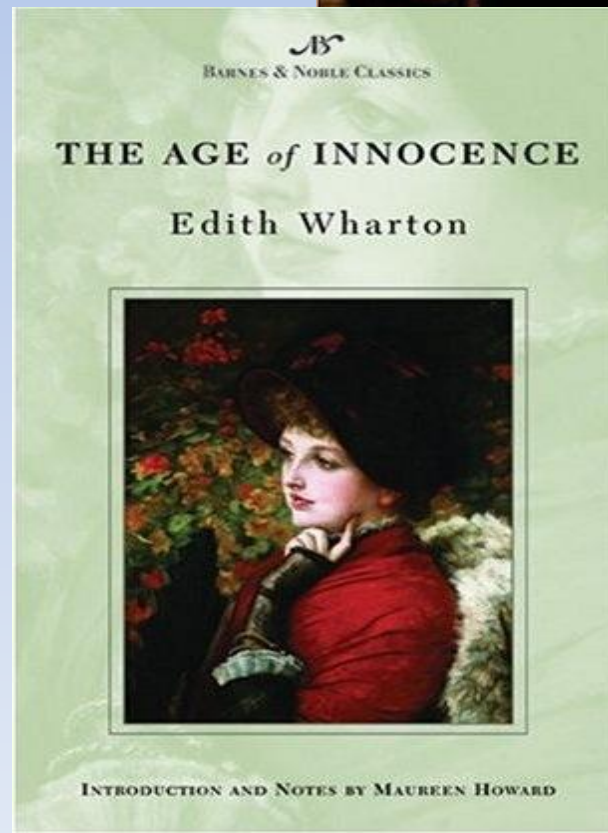
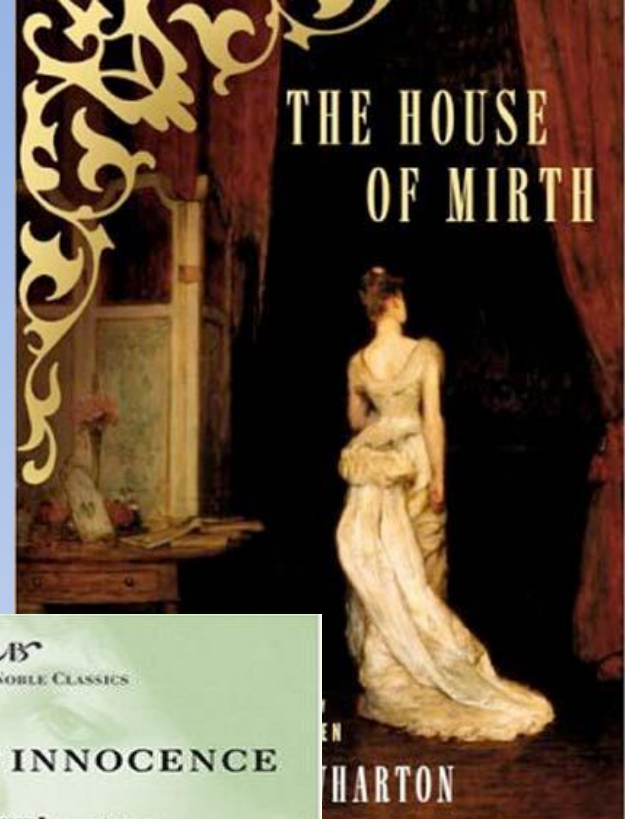
**Mark Twain**





Jack London

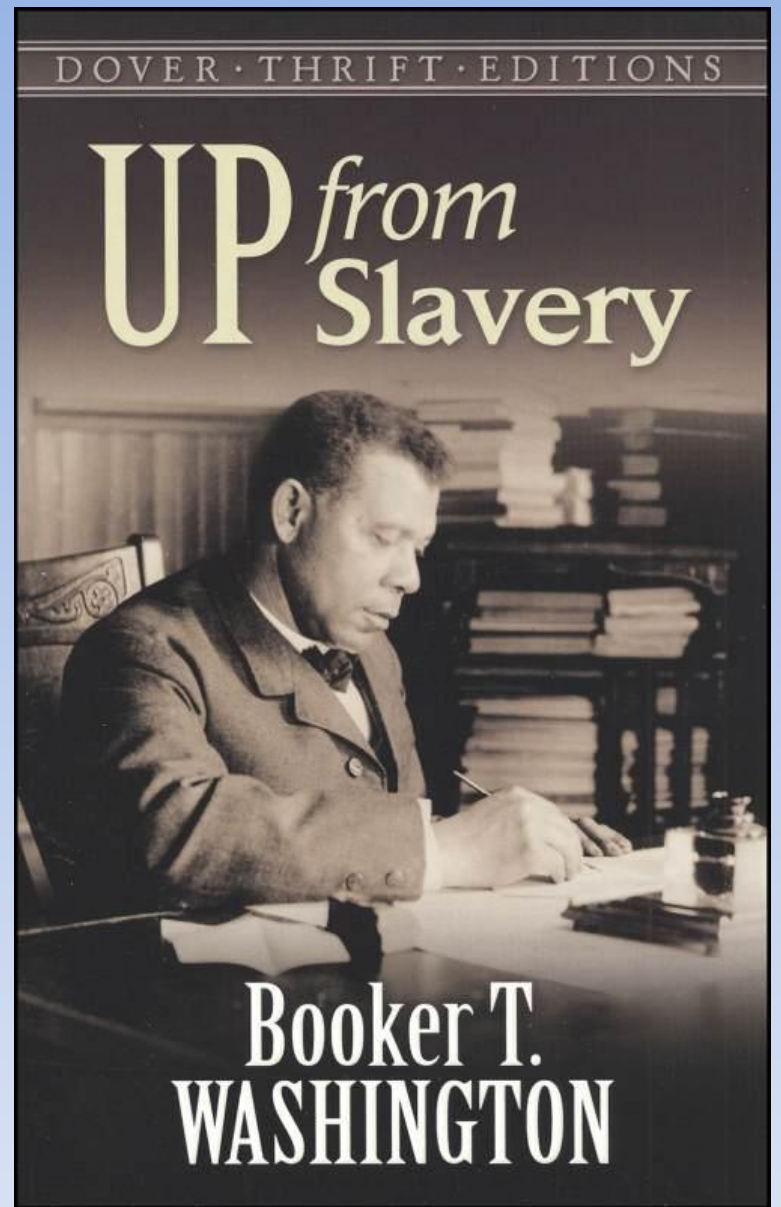
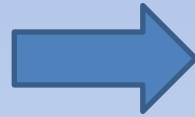




**Edith Wharton**



Booker T. Washington





William Dean Howell:  
"Realism is nothing  
more and nothing  
less than the truthful  
treatment of  
material."

