

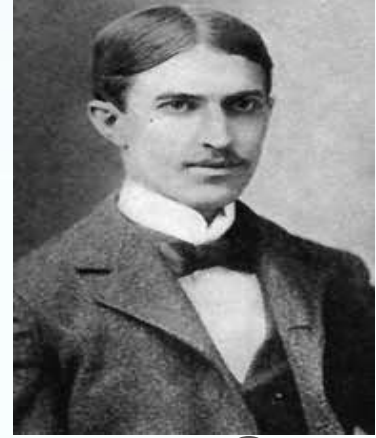
# NATURALISM

UNIT FOUR

- Naturalism is essentially a literary expression of determinism. Associated with bleak, realistic depictions of lower-class life, determinism denies religion as a motivating force in the world and instead perceives the universe as a machine. Eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers had also imagined the world as a machine, but as a perfect one, invented by God and tending toward progress and human betterment. Naturalists imagined society, instead, as a blind machine, godless and out of control.

# Naturalism and Muckraining

- Stephen Crane 1871—1900
- Jack London 1876-1916
- Theodore Dreiser 1871-1945



# Stephen Crane 1871— 1900

- Crane saw life at its rawest, in slums and on battlefields. His short stories -- in particular, "The Open Boat," "The Blue Hotel," and "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" -- exemplified that literary form. His haunting Civil War novel, *The Red Badge of Courage*, was published to great acclaim in 1895, but he barely had time to bask in the attention before he died, at 29, having neglected his health.



# Jack London 1876-1916

- A poor, self-taught worker from California, the naturalist Jack London was catapulted from poverty to fame by his first collection of stories, *The Son of the Wolf* (1900), set largely in the Klondike region of Alaska and the Canadian Yukon. Other of his best-sellers, including *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) made him the highest paid writer in the United States of his time.



# Theodore Dreiser 1871-1945

- Despite his awkward style, Dreiser, in *An American Tragedy*, displays crushing authority. Its precise details build up an overwhelming sense of tragic inevitability. The novel is a scathing portrait of the American success myth gone sour, but it is also a universal story about the stresses of urbanization, modernization, and alienation. Within it roam the romantic and dangerous fantasies of the dispossessed.

# The Chicago School of Poetry

- Edgar Lee Masters 1868-1950
- Carl Sandburg 1878-1967
- Vachel Lindsay 1879-1931
- Edwin Arlington Robinson 1869-1935

# Edgar Lee Masters 1868-1950

- Among the intriguing contemporary poets the journal printed was Edgar Lee Masters, author of the daring *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), with its new "unpoetic" colloquial style, frank presentation of sex, critical view of village life, and intensely imagined inner lives of ordinary people.



# Carl Sandburg 1878-1967

- A friend once said, "Trying to write briefly about Carl Sandburg is like trying to picture the Grand Canyon in one black-and-white snapshot." Poet, historian, biographer, novelist, musician, essayist -- Sandburg, son of a railroad blacksmith, was all of these and more. A journalist by profession, he wrote a massive biography of Abraham Lincoln that is one of the classic works of the 20th century.

# Vachel Lindsay 1879-1931

- To popularize poetry, Lindsay developed what he called a "higher vaudeville," using music and strong rhythm. Racist by today's standards, his famous poem "The Congo" (1914) celebrates the history of Africans by mingling jazz, poetry, music, and chanting.

# Edwin Arlington Robinson 1869-1935

- Edwin Arlington Robinson is the best U.S. poet of the late 19th century. He is known for short, ironic character studies of ordinary individuals.
- Some of the best known of Robinson's dramatic monologues are "Luke Havergal" (1896), about a forsaken lover; "Miniver Cheevy" (1910), a portrait of a romantic dreamer; and "Richard Cory" (1896).

# Two Women Regional Novelist

- Ellen Glasgow 1873-1945
- Willa Cather 1873-1947

# Ellen Glasgow 1873-1945

- Her realistic novels examine the transformation of the South from a rural to an industrial economy.

# Willa Cather 1873-1947

- Cather's works commemorate important aspects of the American experience outside the literary mainstream -- pioneering, the establishment of religion, and women's independent lives.

# The Rise of Black American Literature

- Booker T. Washington 1856-1915
- W.E.B. Du Bois 1868-1963
- James Weldon Johnson 1871-1938
- Charles Waddell Chesnut 1858-1932

# Modernism and Experimentation 1914-1945

- In the postwar "Big Boom," business flourished, and the successful prospered beyond their wildest dreams. For the first time, many Americans enrolled in higher education -- in the 1920s college enrollment doubled. The middle-class prospered; Americans began to enjoy the world's highest national average income in this era, and many people purchased the ultimate status symbol -- an automobile