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Nota di contenuto	Introduction: American literary realism -- 1. Literary precursors, literary contexts -- 2. The 'look of agony' and everyday middle-class life: three transitional works -- 3. Creating the 'odor' of the real: techniques of realism -- 4. Conflicting manners: high realism and social competition -- 5. 'Democracy in literature'? Literary regionalism -- 6. 'The blab of the pave': realism and the city -- 7. Crisis of agency: literary

naturalism, economic change, 'masculinity' -- 8. 'Certain facts of life': realism and feminism -- 9. 'The unjust spirit of caste': realism and race -- 10. New Americans write realism -- Conclusion: realisms after realism.

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## Sommario/riassunto

Between the Civil War and the First World War, realism was the most prominent form of American fiction. Realist writers of the period include some of America's greatest, such as Henry James, Edith Wharton and Mark Twain, but also many lesser-known writers whose work still speaks to us today, for instance Charles Chesnutt, Zitkala-Sa and Sarah Orne Jewett. Emphasizing realism's historical context, this introduction traces the genre's relationship with powerful, often violent, social conflicts involving race, gender, class and national origin. It also examines how the realist style was created; the necessarily ambiguous relationship between realism produced on the page and reality outside the book; and the different, often contradictory, forms 'realism' took in literary works by different authors. The most accessible yet sophisticated account of American literary realism currently available, this volume will be of great value to students, teachers and readers of the American novel.

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