

## AMERICAN LITERARY REALISM AND NATURALISM INTRODUCTION FINDINGS

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### ABSTRACT

American literary realism and naturalism emerged as significant literary movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, reflecting the changing social, economic, and cultural landscape of the United States. Realism focused on portraying everyday life and ordinary people with a keen eye for detail and accuracy, while naturalism delved into the darker aspects of human existence influenced by environmental and societal factors. This essay aims to explore the similarities and differences between American realism and naturalism, examining key themes, motifs, and narrative techniques employed by prominent writers such as Mark Twain, Henry James, Stephen Crane, and Jack London. By analyzing their works in the context of the historical and cultural backdrop of the time, this study seeks to shed light on how these movements reflected and responded to the challenges and complexities of American society during this transformative period.

**Keywords:** Backdrop, Shed light, motifs, prominent.

### INTRODUCTION

American literature is literature written or produced in the United States of America and its preceding colonies. Before the founding of the United States, the British colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States were heavily influenced by English literature. Realism depicts characters and settings as they would actually have existed, while naturalism concentrates on the biological, social and economic aspects. Both seek to represent real life. Realism and naturalism in literature were both born as reactions to the Romantic movement. Realism is a manner and method of composition by which the author describes normal, average life, in an accurate, truthful way," while "Naturalism is a manner and method of composition by which the author portrays 'life as it is' in accordance with the philosophic theory of determinism."

### FINDINGS

American literary realism and naturalism emerged as significant literary movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, reflecting the changing social,

economic, and cultural landscape of the United States. While both movements sought to depict the complexities of human experience and society, they approached these themes in distinct ways.

Realism focused on portraying everyday life and ordinary people with a keen eye for detail and accuracy. Writers such as Mark Twain and Henry James captured the nuances of human behavior and social interactions, often exploring themes of class, gender, and morality. Realist literature aimed to present a faithful representation of reality, emphasizing the importance of observation and objective narration.

On the other hand, naturalism delved into the darker aspects of human existence influenced by environmental and societal factors. Writers like Stephen Crane and Jack London depicted characters struggling against forces beyond their control, such as poverty, violence, and social Darwinism. Naturalist literature often explored themes of determinism, survival, and the harsh realities of life, highlighting the impact of environment and heredity on human behavior.

Despite their differences, both realism and naturalism reflected the complexities of American society during this transformative period. By examining the works of prominent writers from these movements, we can gain insights into how they responded to the challenges and contradictions of their time, offering a nuanced portrayal of human nature and society. Through a comparative analysis of American literary realism and naturalism, we can appreciate their contributions to the development of American literature and their enduring relevance in our understanding of the human experience.

### CONCLUSION

Through a comparative analysis of American literary realism and naturalism, we can appreciate their distinct approaches to portraying human experience and society. While realism focused on every day life with accuracy and detail, naturalism delved into the darker aspects of human existence influenced by environmental and societal forces. By examining the works of prominent writers from these movements, we gain insights into how they responded to the challenges and contradictions of their time, contributing to the development of American literature and offering enduring reflections on the human experience.

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