

Literary movements of transcendentalism, realism, and naturalism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Seeing the Real World

American literature explores the human thought process by showing how and why some actions take place. The social and natural world of a human's involvement comes to play as hard written text by well-known authors, show the evolution of writing and the study of certain philosophical concepts. The well known art movements such as Transcendentalism, Realism, and Naturalism have been demonstrated in how and why the human's forever evolving thought process could be explained by how the world around them continues to develop.

Transcendentalism is a literary movement that impacts the perception of philosophical, religious, and social ideas. Transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson discuss topics of the ideas and principles of this concept. Thus, continuing to hold on to the idea of literary freedom through individualism. For instance, Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience", gives the statement that people should refuse to obey any law they believe is unjust by saying "Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?" (Thoreau 786). The execution of government is unjustified with corruptive laws that are reasoned out by the conscience of the governmental leaders of the community. The morality of a governmental rule seems to have a role of intimidation to allow it to continue to be followed. Thoreau's view of the unjust qualities of the government was people should be able to follow their own expedient or inexpedient conscience, regardless of what the government says. The demonstration of the human gift of intuition and insight with inspiration continues on in transcendentalism.

<https://assignbuster.com/literary-movements-of-transcendentalism-realism-and-naturalism/>

The concept of realism demonstrates the real world through literature. Like transcendentalism, it covers the concept of realistic ideas that would be relatable to the readers. The more relatable the text, the more it will continuously engage a human's natural intuition. It exercises the approach of discussing the familiar and important social events and changes in society. Realism familiarizes the text by including the circumstances of everyday life. Authors such as Edith Wharton, William Howells, and Henry James wrote novels that specialized the awareness of everyday life issues along with the subtlety of writing. For example, Edith Wharton's "Roman Fever", is about two women interacting and discussing their lives on a balcony. During the time of the malaria outbreak in Rome, Wharton used the sickness as an example disguising the two women's disease of jealousy towards each other. As Wharton would explain it, "So these two ladies visualized each other, each through the wrong end of their little telescope" (Wharton 1374). Wharton's way of revealing the feminine competition is having the two main characters compare their lives to each other. Thus, showing the dynamic that comes through the reflection of how much they have changed and the concept of who has the better life throughout the story of the book. Realism and transcendentalism work together by letting the readers reflect on themselves and how their conscience justifies their own individual actions in the natural, real world.

Realism, transcendentalism, and naturalism connect and have a huge impact on the literary world. Naturalism and realism photographically project the real world through text. The two are so similar, yet can be so different.

Naturalist writers have not taken an interest to apply the idea of

individualism, but instead, are more likely to discuss political manners.

European naturalism impressed many of the artists and realistic writers. The European naturalists valued empirical descriptions of experience in the production of realistic life. The emphasis on concrete character and environmental factors was inherited by naturalists. Naturalists would often take their writing to involve in the extraordinary ideas outside of realism. Thus, they show the how's and why's of literature in everyday society.

Since realism and naturalism are such similar types of writing, Henry James, Mark Twain, and Theodore Dreiser all wrote and published works that fell in the category of naturalism. For example, Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi", was written in the way of realistic language, making his narration a conversation. Dropping the majority of formalities in his writing, Twain continues to make the reader feel like as if they are experiencing all the things he has experienced throughout his texts with great detail. For example,

"The white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets empty, or pretty nearly so; one or two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores, with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the walls, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep-with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down; a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk" (Twain 1065).

Twain's description of the town fully commits to the idea of realistic imagery. Twain used a natural force to let the reader reflect during his time period. Twain includes the boy's surprise of recognizing himself as the apprentice

engineer when he says, “ This shook the bottom out of all my Sunday-school teachings. That boy had been notoriously worldly, and I just the reverse; yet he was exalted to this eminence, and I left in obscurity and misery” (Twain 1067). This illustrated Twain’s writing of criticism of social environment and ethicality. Twain portrays the competitive way for such materialistic values of society by showing the reaction and difference of treatment from the titles of the social ranking. Twain’s description of reversive treatment and judgment show that society will continuously treat one differently based on which class one would present themselves.

Transcendentalism, realism, and naturalism impacted literature with different perceptions that they each offer. Transcendentalism shows the concept of finding the truth that exists beyond experience and reason. Thus, showing that the truth can be proven without hardcore evidence. As for realism, it portrays realistic imagery of the real world by revealing the incidents of everyday life in literature. The face of the real world could be sugar-coated through literature with romanticism. Naturalism continues with the concept of revealing the real world by using a photographic force in political, scientific, social and economic problems that occur and people struggle with everyday. Overall, the development of these three art movements throughout literature has greatly impacted its readers and future writers.

Work Cited Page

- Perkins, George B., and Barbara Perkins. *The American Tradition in Literature* . McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009.

- Thoreau, Henry David. “ Civil Disobedience”. *The American Tradition in Literature* . McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009, pp. 767–782.
- Twain, Mark. “ Life on the Mississippi.” *The American Tradition in Literature* . McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009, pp. 1064–1074.
- Wharton, Edith. “ Roman Fever”. *The American Tradition in Literature* . McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009, pp. 1371–1379.