

# [The not celebrated as a hero and](https://assignbuster.com/the-not-celebrated-as-a-hero-and/)

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Thetexts “ To Build a Fire” and “ The Return of a Private” are two works from thesemester that outline the contrast between naturalism and realism.

InJack London’s work “ To Build A Fire”, he depicts nature as an overpoweringforce that man cannot overcome. We see this in the main characters persevering battleto survive through the cold and the death of the main character despite thisperseverance. Hamlin Garland’s “ The Return of a Private” illustrates the lifeof Private Smith when he returns home from the Civil War to find his farm injeopardy. Instead of a lovely reunion and the bliss of home life in comparisonto war, he is faced with the reality of coming home and it’s almost as if henever went off to war in the first place. Upon return he was not celebrated asa hero and given comfortable accommodations, but slapped in the face with thestruggles of the working middle class.

Thefocus of realism is on the true struggles of the average human, and oftenconcentrates on the middle and lower class because they tend to face morehardships in life than the wealthy do, simply due to their socioeconomic class. Naturalism is similar to realism in that it is a form of realism focused on thenatural aspects of the world. In naturalism, nature is one of, if not the only, force in our lives that determines our fate and it cannot be altered by humanaction. The context that these stories use both realism and naturalism in provideus with explicit differentiation between the two topics. Themain characters fight against nature in “ To Build a Fire” evidently representsthe side of naturalism. Their overconfident and persistent battle againstnature that ultimately ends in the inevitable death of the character shows the helplessnessof man and the power of nature in this story.

In “ The Return of a Private”, Private Smith was optimistic that the war was as bad as it could get and cominghome would only be the best yet to come. However, the author demonstrates thechallenge of overcoming ones socioeconomic conditions with the shock of returningto the reality of personal economic crisis. The minimal effect that war had onPrivate Smith’s life afterwards advocates for the honest representation of thebrutalities of life used in realism. Realismmostly focuses on social movements, everyday life difficulties, and relativism.” The Return of a Private” clearly portrays realism in the author’s focus of theendless struggles of the working class. Naturalism focuses more on the specificforce of nature and the conflict it presents to man.

“ To Build a Fire” is anexcellent representation of naturalism as it illustrates man’s powerlessnessagainst nature and the brutality it can inflict on man. Both stories are aclear representation of their respective topics and help the reader to deeper distinguishthe difference between them in the context of literature.