

C'est la vie

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



C'est la vie The literary art of realism is used by authors in pieces of literature to portray how life really is for some people and also to prove that there isn't a happy ending to every story. 19th century authors like Mark Twain and Henry James mastered the genre of realism in their time period. This was the time in history that writers realized that all stories didn't need to have a "Cinderella story" ending, but rather provide descriptions of the conditions of living and seek to record "life as it really is". The majority of Twain's stories are about people that are of low class and society. On the other hand, James' works of literature are more about rich folk, or newly rich people in some cases. For instance, in the story Daisy Miller by Henry James, Daisy and her family had recently acquired some wealth and traveled to Europe for vacation. They came to see the sights, sounds and to simply take a break like any other family would. James also included many conflicts between Americans and Europeans, (Daisy and Winterbourne) and this has a huge effect on the plot considering Daisy is a young, careless, unpolished, and flirty young lady who likes to have many gentlemen as "friends". Here is a quote from the story in which Daisy is babbling on to Winterbourne: "I have more friends in New York than in Schenectady-more gentleman friends; and more young lady friends too," she resumed in a moment. She paused again for an instant; she was looking at Winterbourne with all her prettiness in her lively eyes and in her light, slightly monotonous smile. "I have always had," she said, "a great deal of gentleman's society" (James 10). The above quote is Daisy bragging to Winterbourne about her many gentlemen friends back in New York as well as her young lady friends. Daisy is telling Winterbourne exactly how life is and some rudeness in her tone can be

sensed. Towards the end of the story, Daisy and a man that they called Giovanelli went off at night to the coliseum to converse but they didn't know that Daisy would get sick with malaria because this area was a major mosquito breeding ground. She eventually died and When Winterbourne heard about this he felt sore and angry. He approached Giovanelli and said, "Why the devil, " he asked, " did you take her to that fatal place"? (James 65) (referring to the coliseum) This quote is a great example of literary realism because not everyone in the story lives happily ever after. The main character died, and it is as simple as that. This story very much so contributes to this period of realism because it " turned the tides" of the perfect storybook ending and it completely changed the pace of the story. Although much of Henry James' work is about the people of higher class and society, horrible things like death and sorrow only add to the realistic elements of his stories. Daisy Miller was part of a rich family, but this didn't compare to real values and behaviors that she didn't possess such as a poor education, an improper upbringing, and terrible personal conduct. Her own ditsy behavior put herself in a bad situation and that eventually led to her death. James was and still is a renowned author of realism because of his ability to convey life as it really was and in this case, prove that there is not a happy ending to every story. " Hollywood always wanted me to be pretty, but I fought for realism. " —Bette Davis