

Realism (A Life)

works of Geoffrey Chaucer, particularly in Canterbury Tales.

- Realism was a literary device used in this work.
- Chaucer provide medieval life in its nakedness, providing a direct transcription of daily life.

Introduction:

The Realism art movement of the 19th century was a dramatic shift from the exotic and poetic Romanticism that dominated the art world in the decades prior. Literary realism, in particular, introduced a new way of writing and a new generation of authors whose influence can still be seen in American literature and English literature to this day.

What is Realism?

Realism is a literary movement that represents reality by portraying mundane, everyday experiences as they are in real life. It depicts familiar people, places, and stories, primarily about the middle and lower classes of society. Literary realism seeks to tell a story as truthfully as possible instead of dramatizing or romanticizing it.

Definition:

"Realism or literary realism is an era or literary technique in which authors described

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things as they are without embellishment
or fantastical plot.

History of Realism:

Literary realism is a part of the realist movement that started in 19th century France and lasted until the early twentieth century. It began as a reaction to eighteenth-century Romanticism and the rise of the bourgeois in Europe. Works of Romanticism were thought to be too exotic and to have lost touch with the real world. The roots of the literary realism lie in France, where realist writers published works of realism in novels and in serial form in newspapers. The earliest realist writers include Honoré de Balzac, who infused his writing with complex characters and detailed observations about society, and Gustave Flaubert, who established realist narration as we know it today.

Importance of Realism in Literature:

1. 'Realism' aimed to highlight the 'reality' or the 'true nature of reality' in works of literature.

2. The aim of a text of literary realism is to portray real life as it is perceived around us.
3. Authors of realism, particularly the realist novel, use narrative techniques to convey what the characters or narrators believe to be unbiased, objective truths.
4. Realism is important in literature bcz it shows the everyday experiences of regular, usually middle or lower class people in a society.
5. Realism provides the average person with stories that they can relate to, as these stories can reflect their experiences.
6. Realism contributed significantly to literature bcz it offered a contrast to Romanticism, a literary movement with idealised portrayals of the characters and their experiences. Realism focused instead on truthful storytelling and the everyday person, making these stories more reliable to the average person.

Characteristics / Tenets / Themes / Elements of Realism:

1. Realism attempts to describe life without

Jane Austen's art in Realism is demonstrated through following ways:

- Meticulous consciousness of her artistry.
- Good humor and acute moral judgement.
- Charm and consciousness in her stories.
- Use of real-life and experiences in her story.
etc.

Romantic subjectivity and idealization. It focuses on actualities of life and truthful treats the common place characters of daily life.

- Realism presents the truthful depiction of society. It presents the things like characters, their circumstances, their conditions, and sufferings as they are. Realistic writers present society and issues connected with it.
- Realistic setting is another hallmark of Realism. Like in Charles Dickens "A Tale of Two Cities", setting is England and France during the French Revolution. Time & place of action are completely realistically presented in realistic piece of writings.
- As it is a movement characterized by the representation of real life so characters must be true to life. It portrays the ordinary people and their everyday life. So common characters are the centre of focus in these writings.
- The kind of life presented in the realistic writings is verisimilitude i.e. the real life of people. In other words,

the life presented in the plays is the slice of life.

- Objectivity in characters is also a big characteristic of Realism, where writers detach themselves from their subjectivity and adopted a pure objective look in their writings.

- There is no escapism possible in Realism, which is strongly presented in Romanticism.

As realism is the acceptance of reality, it centers society so there is no escapism possible in this case as man lacks control over society.

- In realism, faithful representation of reality including the minute details of nature and imp. It focuses on literary techniques like symbolism, suggestiveness. It presents reality by using symbolism or adopting suggestive approach towards society/reality.

- The truth presented in these writings is relative, associated with experience and its consequences. Realism shows that a person's decisions or actions are biased upon his response to the situation.

Victorian Literature..

- Describe things as they are without fantastical elements.
- Emphasized social and political issues.
- Focused on detachment, objectivity, & accurate observation.
- Rejected poetic language and extravagant diction.
- Used stage settings that accurately reproduced ordinary surroundings etc



- More importance given to the characterization is the hallmark of Realism. It has psychological analysis, exploration of moods, emotions, feelings, working of mind, soul and heart of characters.
- Realism depicts ordinary middle class people.

Types / Subgenres of Realism:

There are several different types of realism. Each tries to accomplish something different and has interesting characteristics that are imp to understand.

- **Social Realism:** Focuses on the lives of the poor. These stories might describe their living conditions, jobs, relationships & dreams.

Example: A Christmas Carol (1843) by Charles Dickens is a well-known example of Social Realism.

- **Magic Realism:** is one of the best and most interesting types of realism in that it combines reality with dream-like, fantastical elements. The world is described as it is, but with additional elements that are not found in nature.

Example: An example of magical realism is *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison.

- **Socialist Realism:** is created by Joseph Stalin that celebrates the work and lives of the proletariat, or the working classes.

Some of the best-known novels were written in the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution.

Example: Alexander Fadeyev's *The Young Guard* (1946) is an example of socialist realism.

- **Kitchen Sink Realism:** is related to social realism. It focuses specifically on working-class British men who spend much of their time in pubs. The men in these novels work to make their dreams a reality in the wake of war.

Example: A famous example of Kitchen Sink Realism is *Love on the Dole: A Tale of Two Cities* (1933) by Walter Greenwood.

- **Naturalism:**

Naturalism is a type of realism that shows how family, one's environment and social conditions shape one's character. It was

influenced by Charles Darwin's and Emile Zola's writings

Example: The Grapes of Wrath (1939) by John Steinbeck is an example of naturalism.

- **Psychological Realism:** Focuses on the internal dialogue or thoughts and convictions of characters. Through psychological realism, authors can explain why characters do the things they do.

Example: An example of psychological realism is the novel A Portrait of a Lady (1881) by Henry James.

Synonyms of Realism.

Realism, like all other literary devices, is also irreplaceable, yet a few following words come close to it in meanings. They include fidelity, authenticity, verisimilitude, truthfulness, accuracy, naturalism, and faithfulness.

Notable Realist Authors

Some of the best-known realist writers were:

- Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)
- Stephen Crane
- Daniel Defoe
- John Steinbeck
- George Moore
- Jack London
- Henry James
- George Eliot
- Emile Zola
- Alexander Pope
- Kate Chopin
- Leo Tolstoy
- Henrik Ibsen
- Thomas Hardy

Examples of Realism:

- *Middlemarch* by George Eliot
- *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London
- *The Story of an Hour* by Kate Chopin
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain.

Conclusion:

Realism in literature was incredibly

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popular and was demonstrated through
the use of reliable everyday characters
and situations. It is practiced by many
writers in different historical periods

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