

## ENLIGHTENMENT LITERATURE TO REALISM AND NATURALISM

Enlightenment, Neoclassical, Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism reveal how writers portray society, culture, and human life. Each period highlights different approaches, from reason and order to emotion and realism. This module explores their key works, authors, and forms, showing how social context and human experience shaped literature.

### Enlightenment and Neoclassical Literature

**Enlightenment and Neoclassical literature (1660–1800 CE)** focused on **reason, logic, social critique, and moral order**.

The **Enlightenment (Age of Reason)** encouraged people to **think carefully, question authority, and explore the world through science and logic**. Writers often used **satire and wit** to **examine society and human behavior**.

**Neoclassicism** revived **ancient Greek and Roman literary forms**, valuing **clarity, order, and balance**. Influenced by Enlightenment ideals, it emphasized **structured writing, moral lessons, and universal truths**, often using **satire** to critique society.

### Main Forms

1. **Reason** in Enlightenment and Neoclassical literature promotes **critical thinking and logical understanding**. Writers used reason to **challenge traditions, question authority, and encourage reform**.

**Example:** Voltaire, a French Enlightenment writer and philosopher, used his novella *Candide* to critique **blind optimism, organized religion, and societal injustices** through sharp reasoning and wit.

2. **Satire** in Enlightenment and Neoclassical literature **employs humor, irony, and exaggeration to reveal flaws in society or human behavior**.

**Example:** Jonathan Swift, an Irish satirist, wrote *A Modest Proposal*, ironically suggesting that the poor sell their children as food to solve famine. This shocking exaggeration exposed **societal neglect** and criticized **governmental indifference**.

### Importance of Studying Enlightenment and Neoclassical Literature

- **Develop Critical Thinking** – They encourage **analyzing ideas, questioning assumptions, and forming well-reasoned judgments**.
- **Understand Social Critique** – They show how writers use **satire and reason to explore ethics and civic responsibility**.
- **Promote Structure and Clarity** – They demonstrate **balance, order, and disciplined expression**.

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## Romanticism in Literature

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**Romanticism in literature (1780–1850 CE)** emphasized **emotion, nature, imagination, the sublime, and individualism**. Writers celebrated **personal feelings, creativity, and unique experiences**. They explored the **beauty and power of nature, the awe-inspiring experiences (the sublime), and the freedom to think and feel as individuals**, often breaking away from strict rules and traditional forms.

### Main Forms of Romanticism

1. **Emotion** in Romanticism emphasizes **intense feelings** and **personal experience** to understand human life.

**Example:** William Wordsworth, an English poet, wrote *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* to celebrate how a simple scene of daffodils can inspire **joy, peace, and reflection**.

2. **Nature** in Romanticism serves as a source of **inspiration, beauty, and spiritual insight**.

**Example:** Percy Bysshe Shelley, an English poet, wrote *Ode to the West Wind*, personifying the wind as a **force of change** and highlighting **nature's power** and its influence on **human thought**.

3. **Imagination** in Romanticism explores **creativity, fantasy, and alternative realities** beyond traditional rules.

**Example:** Mary Shelley, an English novelist and the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, wrote *Frankenstein* to explore **ambition, ethics, and the consequences of challenging natural laws** through **imaginative storytelling**.

4. **The Sublime** in Romanticism conveys **overwhelming beauty, awe, or terror**, often connected to **nature or intense emotion**.

**Example:** Samuel Taylor Coleridge, an English poet, wrote *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to evoke **fear, guilt, and wonder** through the **vast sea, supernatural events, and the mariner's isolation**.

5. **Individualism** in Romanticism celebrates **personal freedom, self-expression, and moral reflection**.

**Example:** Lord Byron, an English poet, wrote *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, featuring a hero who values his own **personal experiences** over societal expectations.

### Importance of Studying Romanticism

- **Understand the Power of Emotion** – It emphasizes **feelings, intuition, and imagination** as central to understanding human experience.
- **Appreciate Nature's Influence** – It explores how **nature inspires creativity, reflection, and spiritual insight**.
- **Recognize Personal Expression** – It highlights **individuality, originality, and freedom from societal constraints**.

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## Realism and Naturalism

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**Realism and Naturalism (1850–1910 CE)** aimed to depict life **accurately** and **objectively**. These works focus on **everyday experiences**, **human behavior**, and **social conditions**.

**Realism** portrayed **ordinary people** and **everyday life**. It focuses on **moral choices**, **social interactions**, and **ethical dilemmas**, emphasizing **society's influence** on individuals.

**Naturalism** was built upon Realism but emphasized **determinism**, showing how **environment**, **heredity**, and **social conditions** shape human behavior. Naturalist works often depict life as **harsh and inevitable**, illustrating **forces beyond individual control**.

### Main Forms of Realism and Naturalism

1. **Social Critique** in Realism and Naturalism examines **society** by exposing **inequalities**, **corruption**, and **social injustices**. Writers encourage readers to reflect on **ethical dilemmas** and the **human condition**.

**Example:** Émile Zola, a French novelist and leader of the Naturalist movement, wrote *Germinal*, portraying the **harsh lives** of 19th-century coal miners in France. It vividly reveals **poverty**, **exploitation**, and **class struggles**, criticizing **social** and **economic systems** that **oppress workers**.

2. **Detailed Characterization** in Realism and Naturalism presents **characters** with **complex personalities**, **motivations**, and **moral struggles**. Writers emphasize **psychological realism**, showing how **environment**, **society**, and **heredity** shape human behavior.

**Example:** Mark Twain, an American novelist, wrote *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, exploring Huck's **moral struggles**, **choices**, and **growth** in response to **society** and his **environment**.

### Importance of Studying Realism and Naturalism

- **Depict Everyday Life** – They portray **ordinary people**, **daily experiences**, and **realistic social settings**.
- **Examine Influences on Behavior** – They show how **external forces**, such as **environment**, **family**, and **society**, shape characters' actions and decisions.
- **Explore Social Challenges** – They highlight **economic hardship**, **social inequality**, and **ethical conflicts** in daily life.

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