

## **Traditions of Realism and Naturalism in Xx Century American Literature**

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**Abstract.** *Literary trends as realism and naturalism have played a significant role in the development of XX century American Literature. While realists described events based on the observation and reflection of the details of the daily events, the advancements in science, especially Darwin's teachings, introduced new ideas and perspectives in literature which led to emergence of naturalism in XX century American naturalism. The following paper discusses factors that led to American realism and naturalism, representatives that significantly contributed to the development of the literature.*

**Keywords:** *realism, naturalism, XX century, American Literature, writer, society, person, traditions, trend.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In American literature, the traditions of realism began in the last quarter of the 19th century and slowly developed, with realistic tendencies in prose continuing till 20th century. Although in the 20th century, literary trends such as naturalism, regionalism, critical realism, psychological realism, modernism were prioritized at certain stages, the literature of the nation in general became in the course of realism. While realism refers to describe life as it is, it is not an exaggeration to say that naturalism is a movement that aims cover all the details in the work.

### **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literary critic E.Werlock compares realism to the art of painting, naturalism to photography [3; 361]. In his view, the realist chooses details with extreme care to depict real life in a model of creation, while the naturalist, like the photographer, describes all existing details in his focus. This aspect also ensures the artistic coloring of naturalistic works.

### **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The feeling of concern about American literature and its attitude towards the people of the country was evident in the prose works and the traditions of realism, which peaked in the last two decades of the 19th century, have become dominant. At first, realistic works were based on the observation and reflection of the details of the events of everyday life. American writers were influenced by the development of realism in Europe and Britain; the works of representatives such as J. Eliot (English literature), I. Turgenev (Russian literature), H. Ibsen (Norwegian literature) with its distinct nature have become a source of inspiration, but a writer, U. D. Howells, has spent his whole talents as well as opportunity to make realism play a part in the development of the country's literature. While the writer expressed his thoughts in his scientific speeches about the lifestyles and behaviors, language

and cultural features of characters in different layers of society, he supported the fact that in order to take realism a leading place in the democratic country's literature, many authors' examples of creative work have to see the world's face and take a strong place in it. As the vast literature of the United States continues to expand uniting representatives of different nations, D. Howells inspired writers of different races, religions, classes who were writing in a realistic direction, to create works that enhance the people's sense of mutual sympathy.

In the 20th century, having acted both as a literary advisor and a patron, D. Howells also stated his ideas in his scientific articles on the developing prose of the literature of the nation. The literature of America, influenced by England and the overall significance of European literary traditions, saw the development of the short story—a genre derived from the smaller genres of narrative within the historical context. The prominent representatives of the historical era, the role of American storytelling in the advancement of Italian, Spanish, French, and English novelists, the uniqueness of 20th-century stories, the contribution of writers like H. James, S. O. Jewett, G. Maupassant, I. Turgenev, and others to the genre's elevation, as well as the harmonious aspects between novella and short story, and the advantages of small narrative genres in realizing artistic intentions, have enriched the perfection of literary works in the national literature with numerous valuable ideas. Particularly, he gave the following definition to the story *“it is a form which I have great pleasure in as a reader, and pride in as an American. If we have not excelled all other moderns in it, we have certainly excelled in it; possibly because we are in the period of our literary development which corresponds to that of other peoples when the short story pre-eminently flourished among them”* [4; 424]. The 20th-century American realistic stories reached a pinnacle in the nation's literary esteem, making it one of the crucial genres for gaining fame in the global literary arena. The literary patterns initiated by U.D. Howells continued in the works of prominent authors such as Sh. Anderson, O. Henry, H. James, S. O. Jewett, who showcase various stylistic variations within the genre.

The advancements in science, especially Darwin's teachings, introduced new ideas and perspectives in literature during the 20th century. This impact led to the emergence of naturalism in literary works, which was characterized by a vivid portrayal of the beginning in narrative prose, reflecting the essence of evolutionary and social forces in American literature. Although realism and naturalism began to develop harmoniously, however, significantly different aspects could be observed in both trends. In many sources, naturalism is applied as “scientific realism” (“scientific realism”), its artistic power from realism is a sharper, more viable fact-based, literary current with a more consistent approach to the problems of the time [5; 24]. Like realists, naturalists also aim to depict social problems in literature, but they specifically focus on portraying harsh environments with all their challenges, unlike the more sympathetic approach of realists. In naturalistic works, the influence of biology, the environment, and other material forces on the formation of life was studied thoroughly. In particular, more attention was paid to the partial interpretation of people belonging to a lower society with less rights and freedoms in the management of their own life. Naturalism depicted the fate of middle-class characters whose lives were derailed by their problems on the edge of society, or at the bottom, as a result of genealogical distortions, harsh environments, lack of money, bad luck.

The stories portray characters' inner thoughts and emotions in a realistic way. Each character faces complex destinies, unique life paths, mistakes, and challenges. These narratives create a vivid picture of their repeated struggles and triumphs in a straightforward manner. In the 20th century American literature, the perfection of such artistic-aesthetic tendencies found its manifestation in the works of many writers like A. Bierce, T. Dreiser, S. Crane, F. Norris, J. London. Particularly, Frank Norris significantly contributed to the development of national literature with his more than twenty stories, such as “A Deal in Wheat”, “San Francisco's Old Chinatown”, “The Passing of Cock-Eye Blacklock” and “A Lost Story”. F. Norris stood out for his insightful exploration of contemporary issues and profound observations. His stories demonstrated a unique mastery in incorporating elements like theme, plot, dialogue, dialect, tone, and content, showcasing his distinctive contribution to literature.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Overall, XX century American realistic literature incorporated short stories, novellas that depicted real life analyzing social problems of daily events. Literary elements in these works as theme, plot, dialogue, tone and characters varied from the one into other making American literature to unique in world literature.

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