

Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism

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(Origins, Explanations, Differences, and Examples)

1. Romanticism

Origin: Late 18th century (1780s), mainly in Europe (Germany and England) reacting against the Industrial Revolution and Enlightenment.

Focus: Emotion, imagination, individuality, love of nature, supernatural, idealism.

Style: Dramatic, emotional language emphasizing personal feelings.

Examples:

- William Wordsworth - Lyrical Ballads
- Mary Shelley - Frankenstein
- Victor Hugo - Les Misérables
- Edgar Allan Poe - The Raven

Key Idea: Feel deeply, imagine freely, and glorify beauty and human spirit.

2. Realism

Origin: Mid-19th century (1850s) in France as a reaction against Romanticism and industrial changes.

Focus: Ordinary life, real social issues, objective truth.

Style: Simple, clear prose with detailed description focusing on characters.

Examples:

- Gustave Flaubert - Madame Bovary
- Leo Tolstoy - Anna Karenina
- Mark Twain - Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Key Idea: Show life exactly as it is.

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3. Naturalism

Origin: Late 19th century (1880s-1900s), influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution.

Focus: Human beings shaped by heredity, environment, and fate.

Style: Scientific, detached tone depicting gritty realities.

Examples:

- Émile Zola - Germinal
- Stephen Crane - The Red Badge of Courage
- Theodore Dreiser - Sister Carrie

Key Idea: Humans are products of biology and environment.

Simple Chart:

Aspect	Romanticism	Realism	Naturalism
When	Late 18th - Early 19th century	Mid-19th century	Late 19th - Early 20th century
Focus	Emotion, imagination, nature	Everyday reality, society	Survival, fate, harsh realities
Tone	Idealistic, emotional	Objective, serious	Detached, pessimistic
Influences	Enlightenment (reaction against)	Industrial Revolution (reaction)	Darwin's Evolution Theory
Examples	Wordsworth, Poe, Hugo	Flaubert, Tolstoy, Twain	Zola, Crane, Dreiser