Realism Study Guide

Realism

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Introduction

The realist movement in literature first developed in France in the mid-nineteenth century, soon spreading to England, Russia, and the United States. Realist literature is best represented by the novel, including many works widely regarded to be among the greatest novels ever written. Realist writers sought to narrate their novels from an objective, unbiased perspective that simply and clearly represented the factual elements of the story. They became masters at psychological characterization, detailed descriptions of everyday life in realistic settings, and dialogue that captures the idioms of natural human speech. The realists endeavored to accurately represent contemporary culture and people from all walks of life. Thus, realist writers often addressed themes of socioeconomic conflict by contrasting the living conditions of the poor with those of the upper classes in urban as well as rural societies.

In France, the major realist writers included Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, and Guy de Maupassant, among others. In Russia, the major realist writers were Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Leo Tolstoy. In England, the foremost realist authors were Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Anthony Trollope. In the United States, William Dean Howells was the foremost realist writer. Naturalism, an offshoot of Realism, was a literary movement that placed even greater emphasis on the accurate representation of details from contemporary life. In the United States, Regionalism and local color fiction in particular were American offshoots of Realism. Realism also exerted a profound influence on drama and theatrical productions, altering practices of set design, costuming, acting style, and dialogue.

Themes

Class Conflict

One of the major themes addressed by realist writers is socioeconomic class conflict. Many realist writers, in their efforts to depict characters from all levels of society, highlighted differences between the rich and the poor.

In *David Copperfield*, by Dickens, the main protagonist experiences the suffering of impoverished children forced to work in industrial factories. In *Germinal*, Zola focuses on the conflict between working-class miners and wealthy mine owners, which erupts in a labor strike. In the process, Zola considers various political theories about the conditions of the working class. In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Howells portrays characters from various places on the spectrum of American political thought who come into conflict over their efforts to start a magazine. In the end of *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, a young man is killed during the violence that erupts in a workers' strike. In *War and Peace*, Tolstoy portrays conflicts between the Russian landowners and the serfs who work their land. Many realist authors thus addressed social, economic, and political concerns through their depictions of socioeconomic class conflict.

The City

Many realist novelists sought to depict various aspects of life in the rapidly industrializing nineteenth- century city. Balzac, in the novels of *The Human Comedy*, is often noted for his extensive and accurate portrayal of society, culture, and commerce in Paris during the mid-nineteenth century. Howells, in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, has been praised for his detailed depiction of the diverse flow of human life in New York City. Dickens set much of his fiction in London, describing specific streets, buildings, and neighborhoods in his novels. Russian realist writers Tolstoy and Dostoevsky described various elements of society in Moscow and St. Petersburg in their novels. Realist fiction thus often has a documentary quality to the extent that these writers have accurately reported the details of a specific historical era in the development of the modern city.

Philosophy and Morality

Realist novelists often address the related themes of religion, philosophy, and morality in their works of fiction. While realist novels are known for their accurate descriptions of various physical details, many of them are also highly theoretical in their presentation of various religious and philosophical debates. The Russian realist Tolstoy, for example, included characters in his novels that grapple with complex questions regarding Christian faith and the meaning of life. The Russian realist Dostoevsky also created fictional characters who carry on extended philosophical discussions and debates about Christian morality. In such novels as *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky was particularly concerned with the moral, ethical, and

religious issues raised by characters who commit crimes such as murder and other acts of depravity. In a famous scene of *The Brothers Karamazov*, one character carries on an imaginary debate with the Devil, who visits him in the form of an aging gentleman. In *Crime and Punishment* a young man who has committed a murder that he justified by his philosophical reasoning later finds redemption through Christian faith.

Marriage and the Family

Realist novelists often focused on the dynamics of marriage and family life in different sectors of society. Extramarital affairs are the subject of such major works of realist fiction as Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, both novels about married middle-class women whose affairs lead to social decline and suicide.

Realist fiction often focuses on several sets of families or couples within a single novel. *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace* each focus on three families. Eliot's *Middlemarch* also focuses on the family and marital dynamics within several different households. Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* focuses on four brothers (including one illegitimate half-brother) and their father, whom one of them has murdered. Dickens often wrote about orphans who were without family but who eventually find people who function as surrogate families. In their portrayals of marriages and families, realists explored various social and psychological factors contributing to the quality of domestic life in the nineteenth century.

Style

Narrative Voice

The term narrative voice refers to the way in which a story is told. Many realist writers sought to narrate their fictional stories in an omniscient, objective voice, from the perspective of a storyteller who is not a character in the story but rather an invisible presence who remains outside the realm of the story. Realist writers hoped thereby to create accurate portrayals of objective reality. The French realists in particular□Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, and Maupassant□sought to describe the subject matter of their fiction in clear, detailed, accurate terms, devoid of judgment or moralizing on the part of the narrator.

Setting

Setting is an important element of Realism in literature. Realist writers sought to document every aspect of their own contemporary cultures through accurate representations of specific settings. Realist novels were thus set in both the city and the country, the authors taking care to accurately portray the working and living conditions of characters from every echelon of society. Thus, realist novelists documented settings from all walks of life in major cities such as London, Paris, New York, Boston, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. The living and working conditions of peasants and serfs in rural settings throughout England, Russia, and France were also represented in great detail by major realist authors.

Realist writers also set their fictional stories in the midst of specific historical events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* is set during the French Revolution. The volume *Evenings at Médan* comprises six short stories by six different authors, all set during the Franco-German war of 1870-1871. Eliot's *Middlemarch* is set in a fictional town in the context of major political debates over social reform which took place in England during the first half of the nineteenth century. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is set in the historical context of the Napoleonic wars between Russia and France during the early 1800s.

Characterization

Many realist writers have been celebrated for their masterful creation of a wide range of characters from all walks of life. Balzac, in his novel series *The Human Comedy*, sought to create an encyclopedic range of characters representing every aspect of contemporary French society. In some ninety novels making up *The Human Comedy*, Balzac created over three thousand different fictional characters. Balzac was also innovative in his use of the same characters within different novels, so that a character who is the protagonist of one novel may show up as a minor character in another novel.

Zola, inspired by Balzac's *The Human Comedy*, represented many aspects of French society through his twenty-volume series *The Rougon- Macquarts*, which centers on one family over several generations. Howells, inspired by the French and Russian realists, included in his novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes* fifteen main characters, each representing different places on the spectrum of American political thought. Dickens is also known for his many unforgettable characters, such as the miserable miser in *A Christmas Carol*, who have become enduring figures in Western culture.

Realist novelists are also celebrated for the impressive psychological detail by which their fictional characters are portrayed. Dostoevsky and Flaubert, in particular, are known for their mastery at delving into every nuance of a character's psychology in order to explain the complex array of factors which contribute to the motivation of that character. In their efforts to represent characters from all walks of life, realist novelists were masterful in their use of dialogue, capturing regional dialects as well as differences in the speech patterns of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Historical Context

France

The nation of France went through several major social and political upheavals during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the Revolution of 1848 the Emperor Louis-Phillipe was deposed as a result of a popular uprising, and his nine-year old grandson named as the new emperor of a new parliamentary government known as the Second Republic. Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of the more famous former emperor and military commander Napoleon Bonaparte, was elected the first president of the Second Republic. Louis-Napoleon ruled as president of France from 1848 until 1852. However, because the French constitution stated that no president could serve more than one fouryear term, Louis-Napoleon staged a coup of his own government at the end of his term so that he could remain in power. In 1852, Louis-Napoleon proclaimed the Second Empire of France and had himself named Emperor Napoleon III. Napoleon III ruled the Second Empire until 1871, when a popular revolt heralded the end of the Second Empire and the beginning of the Third Republic, ruled by a popularly elected president. The Third Republic of France remained relatively stable until 1940 when, during World War II, Germany invaded and occupied France. During periods of the various French Republics, all adult males in France were granted the right to vote in political elections.

Russia

The Russian government was one of the few in Europe that remained relatively stable throughout the nineteenth century. While revolutions swept through Europe in the year 1848, the Russian Empire experienced no such political upheaval. Russia during this time was ruled by a succession of autocratic czars. Czar Alexander II ruled during the period of 1855 to 1881, when he was assassinated in a car bombing by an anarchist activist. Czar Alexander III ruled from 1881 to 1894. The last Emperor of Russia was Czar Nicholas II, who ruled from 1894 until the Russian Revolution of 1917, when he and his family were assassinated. A major social reform took place in Russia in 1861, when the peasant serfs, who were essentially slaves under the control of wealthy landowners, were legally emancipated and granted the right to own land.

England

England during the nineteenth century was characterized by the long reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901, known as the Victorian era. While the Queen remained the sovereign ruler of England, much of the nation's politics were carried out by parliament under a prime minister. Toward the end of the century, the office of prime minister became the predominant political force in England, as the role of the queen in national politics receded into the background.

Throughout the nineteenth century the English government diffused revolutionary pressures by passing a series of major reforms, including the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1885. These reforms included numerous changes in public policy and political structure, significantly expanding access to education, protecting the rights of laborers, and widening the sphere of political enfranchisement. Through expanded voting rights, an increasingly large segment of the adult male population was granted the right to vote in political elections. In addition, slavery was abolished in 1833. Toward the end of the century, organizations pressing for women's voting rights began to gain momentum.

United States

Although the United States has remained stable as a constitutional democracy with an elected president ever since the American Revolution of 1776, not every citizen in the nation had equal rights during the nineteenth century. In the beginning of the century, only white men had the right to vote. Until the end of the Civil War, most African Americans in the United States were slaves to white southern plantation owners. Because they were not considered full citizens, slaves did not have the right to vote. The United States experienced major social and political rupture in the mid-nineteenth century during the Civil War. In the Civil War the southern states rebelled against the United States government under President Lincoln and the northern states over the issue of slavery. The Civil War ended with victory by the North and the U.S. government thus ending the institution of slavery in the United States.

The period after the Civil War is known as the era of Reconstruction, during which the South faced many social and political struggles over issues of race and the rights of the African Americans newly released from slavery. During this period, a constitutional amendment granted all adult males the right to vote, regardless of race. Women, however, were still denied the right to vote, and a national movement to lobby for women's right to vote, eventually known as the woman's suffrage movement, gained momentum.

Movement Variations

Naturalism

Naturalism was an important offshoot of Realism, although many critics agree that the differences between the two movements are so minimal that Naturalism is actually a subcategory of Realism. In fact, the two terms are often used interchangeably. Naturalism extended and intensified the tenets of Realism in that the naturalist writers sought to apply the evolutionary principles of Charles Darwin to their fiction. They believed that the course of each individual's life is determined by a combination of his or her hereditary traits and the historical and sociological environment into which she or he was born. Each character is thus essentially a victim of circumstance and has little power to change the course of his or her life.

The naturalist writers, spearheaded by the French novelist Zola, extended the values of Realism to even greater extremes of objectivity in their detailed observations and descriptions of all echelons of contemporary life. Zola's 1880 article "The Experimental Novel," the manifesto of literary Naturalism, describes the role of the author as that of a scientist examining a specimen under a microscope. In 1880 Zola edited the volume *Evenings at Médan*, a collection of stories by six authors in his circle of naturalists who met regularly at his home in Médan. Followers of Zola's school of Naturalism include Maupassant and Joris-Karl Huysmans in France as well as the German playwright Gerhart Hauptmann and the Portuguese novelist Jose Maria Eca de Queros.

The influence of Naturalism was not seen in American literature until the later writers Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Jack London, and Theodore Dreiser. Naturalism also found its proponents and practitioners in theater and painting.

The Parnassian Poets

The Parnassian poets who emerged in France during the 1860s were another offshoot of the realist movement in literature. The term Parnassian comes from the title of an anthology of poetry to which major poets of this movement contributed; the anthology *Le Parnasse Contemporain* was published in three separate volumes between 1866 and 1876.

The Parnassian poets developed their ideals as a reaction against the emotional outpouring of Romantic poetry. In their poetry, the Parnassians strove for emotional restraint and precise, objective descriptions of their subject matter. The leader of the Parnassian poets was Leconte de Lisle. Other major poets of the Parnassian movement include Albert Glatigny, Theodore de Banville, Francois Coppée, Leon Dierx, and Jose Maria de Heredia. The Parnassians exerted a significant influence on the poetry of Spain, Portugal, and Belgium.

American Regionalism and Local Color Fiction

In the United States, during the post-Civil War era, important subcategories of Realism were Regionalism (also called Midwestern Regionalism) and local color fiction. The regionalist authors were mostly from the Midwestern United States and wrote stories focused on the hardships of rural Midwesterners as well as the inhabitants of the Midwestern city of Chicago. Important regionalist authors include Hamlin Garland, Theodore Dreiser, and Sherwood Anderson. Local color fiction, which is very similar to Regionalism, focuses on the local customs, traditions, dialects, and folklore of small town and rural America. Important local color writers include Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Kate Chopin.

Realism in Painting

The most important artist associated with Realism was the French painter Gustave Courbet (1819-1877). Courbet's works of art were the primary inspiration for the development of Realism in literature. Courbet broke new ground in painting when he depicted the realities of workers and peasants in stark, unromanticized images. Courbet put forth the ground-breaking idea that art should accurately represent unadorned reality and the common man, rather than idealized images. His most famous paintings include "The Stone-Breakers" (1849), which depicts two men performing manual labor in a rural setting, and "Burial at Ornans" (1849), which depicts the funeral of a peasant and includes over forty individual figures. Because of his daring break with artistic standards, Courbet fought an uphill battle for recognition by the art world. In 1855, rejected by a major exhibition in France, Courbet put on his own exhibition of paintings that he labeled "realist." Courbet's Realism became a profound influence on many writers as well as artists throughout Europe. Realism exerted a major influence on nineteenth-century painting in the United States, where it was most notably practiced by Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins. Realism continued to exert a profound influence on various schools of painting of the early-twentieth century.

Representative Authors

Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850)

Honoré de Balzac is recognized as the originator of French Realism in literature and one of the greatest novelists of the nineteenth century. Balzac was born Honoré Balssa on May 20, 1799, in Tours, France. He spent much of his adult life in Paris, where he frequented many of the notable literary salons of the day and began to use the last name de Balzac. Balzac supported himself through writing, typically spending fourteen to sixteen hours a day on his craft. He was a man of great charisma and lived to the excesses of life, abusing coffee and rich food in order to work longer hours. His life's work comprises a series of some ninety novels and novellas collectively entitled *La Comédie humaine* (*The Human Comedy*). Balzac died following a long illness on August 18, 1850, leaving his wife of five months with mountains of debt.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Charles Dickens is known as an early master of the English realist novel and one of the most celebrated and most enduring novelists of all time. Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England, on February 7, 1812. He lived and worked in London as a law clerk, court reporter, and newspaper journalist. With the publication of his first novel, *Pickwick Papers* (1836), Dickens soon became the most popular author in England.

Dickens's major novels include *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), *Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty* (1841), *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844), *Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son, Wholesale, Retail, and for Exportation* (1848), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times: For These Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1861), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865). His Christmas story *A Christmas Carol* (1843) remains an ever-enduring classic. Dickens died of a paralytic stroke in Kent, England, on June 9, 1870.

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881)

Fyodor Dostoevsky (also spelled Dostoyevsky) is known as a major author of Russian realist fiction and one of the greatest novelists of all time. Dostoevsky was born October 30, 1821, in Moscow, Russia. He received a degree in military engineering in 1843 but resigned his post in order to pursue a career in writing. His first published work was a translation from French into Russian of Balzac's novel *Eugénie Grandet*. Dostoevsky's original novella *Bednyye lyudi* (*Poor Folk*), published in 1846, immediately gained the admiration of the leading Russian writers and critics of the day.

In 1849 Dostoevsky was arrested for his association with a group of socialist intellectuals. After eight months in prison, he was given a death sentence and, along

with several other prisoners, led out to be shot by a firing squad. However, at the last moment the sentence was reversed, and the prisoners were allowed to live; this mock-execution had been designed as a form of psychological torture. Dostoevsky was then sentenced to four years in a Siberian prison followed by six years in the army. After serving this ten-year sentence, he went on to a successful career as a novelist and journalist.

Dostoevsky's fiction has had a profound influence on the literature, philosophy, psychology, and religious thought of the twentieth century. His novels are celebrated as masterworks of psychological Realism in their portrayal of individuals haunted by their own dark impulses. Dostoevsky's greatest works include the novels *Prestupleniye I nakazaniye* (1866), translated as *Crime and Punishment*; *Idiot* (1868); *Besy* (1872), translated as *The Possessed*; *Dnevnik pisatelya* (1873-1877), translated as *The Diary of a Writer*; and *Brat'ya Karamazovy* (1880), translated as *The Brothers Karamazov*, as well as the novella *Zapiski iz podpolya* (1864), translated as *Notes from the Underground*. Dostoevsky died in St. Petersburg, Russia, on January 28, 1881, of complications from emphysema.

George Eliot (1819-1880)

George Eliot is the pen name of Mary Ann (or Marian) Evans, one of the most outstanding novelists of English Realism. Eliot was born in Warwickshire, England, on November 22, 1819. After the death of her mother, Eliot took on the role of her father's caretaker. After her father died, she moved to London to support herself as a freelance writer and editor. There, she became acquainted with a circle of free thinkers, including some of the major philosophical and literary minds of the day, such as Herbert Spencer. Eliot's major works include *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), *Middlemarch* (1871-1872), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876). Eliot died suddenly of heart failure in London, England, on December 22, 1880.

Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880)

Gustave Flaubert is known as the cornerstone of French Realism and is celebrated as one of world literature's greatest masters of literary style. Flaubert was born on December 12, 1821, in Rouen, France. He spent most of his adult life at his family estate in Croisset, where he devoted his life to writing. Flaubert became acquainted with many of the important writers of the day, including George Sand, Émile Zola, Alphonse Daudet, Guy de Maupassant, and Ivan Turgenev. His major works include the novels *Madame Bovary* (1857), *Salammbo* (1863), and *L'Education sentimentale* (1869; *Sentimental Education: A Young Man's History*), as well as the volume *Trois Contes* (1877), a compilation of three short stories. Flaubert died from a stroke in Croisset on May 8, 1880.

William Dean Howells (1837-1920)

William Dean Howells is considered the foremost American realist writer of the nineteenth century. Howells was born March 1, 1837, in Martin's Ferry, Ohio. In 1860 he wrote a biography of thenpresidential candidate Abraham Lincoln. After Lincoln was elected, Howells was given a consulship in Venice, Italy, which he held from 1861 to 1865. Upon returning to the United States, he worked as assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine from 1866 until 1871, then as chief editor until 1881.

Howells earned distinction as a highly influential literary critic, championing the realist writing of American authors Henry James, Mark Twain, and Stephen Crane as well as European authors Ivan Turgenev, Henrik Ibsen, Leo Tolstoy, and Émile Zola. Howells's major works include *A Modern Instance* (1882), *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), *Annie Kilburn* (1888), and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890). Howells died in New York City, New York, on May 11, 1920.

Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893)

Guy de Maupassant is known as a major practitioner of Naturalism and Realism in literature and one of the greatest short story writers of all time. Maupassant was born August 5, 1850, near Dieppe, France. When the Franco-German war broke out in 1870, he left law school to serve in the military effort. When the war ended in 1871, Maupassant continued his law studies and began a career in the French bureaucracy. Maupassant developed an important literary apprenticeship under Gustave Flaubert, who also served as a father figure. Flaubert introduced the young writer to major literary figures of the day including Émile Zola, Ivan Turgenev, Edmond de Goncourt, and Henry James.

With the publication of his story "Ball of Fat" (1880), Maupassant gained immediate literary success and was able to quit his job in order to write full time. He went on to publish some three hundred short stories and six novels as well as several nonfiction books and a volume of poetry. Maupassant's major volumes of short stories include *La maison Tellier* (1881), translated as *The Tellier House*; *Mademoiselle Fifi* (1883); *Contes de la bécasse* (1883), translated as *Tales of the Goose*; *Clair de lune* (1884); *Les soeurs Rondoli* (1884), translated as *The Rondoli Sisters*; *Yvette* (1884); *Toine* (1886); *Le Horla* (1887); *Le rosier de Madame Husson* (1888), translated as *The Rose- Bush of Madame Husson*; and *L'Inutile beauté* (1890), translated as *The Useless Beauty*. His most important novels include *Une vie* (1883), translated as *A Woman's Life*; *Bel-Ami* (1885), translated as *Good Friend*; and *Pierre et Jean* (1888), translated as *Pierre and Jean*.

As a result of syphilis, Maupassant suffered increasing mental and psychological instability. He died in a nursing home on July 6, 1893, at the age of forty-two.

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy (also spelled Tolstoi) is known as a major Russian realist writer and one of the most eminent novelists of all time. Tolstoy was born in the Tula Province of the Russian Empire on September 9, 1828. His mother died before he was two years old. By the time Tolstoy was nine, his father had also died. Tolstoy's first publication, *Detstvo* (1852; *Childhood*), is a nostalgic work of fiction based on these early years of his life.

In the early 1850s, Tolstoy joined the military and fought in the Crimean War of 1853-1856. In the late 1870s, he experienced a religious conversion and developed ideas of Christian faith that were at odds with the Russian Orthodox church, from which he was excommunicated in 1901. His religious ideas included a devotion to nonviolence that later influenced Mahatma Gandhi, the great twentieth-century Indian nationalist and proponent of nonviolent resistance.

Tolstoy's greatest novels are *Voini i mir* (1869; *War and Peace*) and *Anna Karenina* (1877). His *Smert Ivana Ilicha* (1886; *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*) is considered one of the greatest examples of the novella, or short novel form. He died of pneumonia in the province of Ryazan on November 20, 1910.

Émile Zola (1840-1902)

Émile Zola, one of the greatest novelists of all time, was the founder of Naturalism in literature, which was a further development of Realism. Zola was born in Paris, France, on April 2, 1840, and grew up in Aix-en-Provence in southern France. Zola's father died when Zola was still in grade school. After his first novel was published in 1865, Zola quit his job as a clerk at a publishing company in order to support himself as a writer. Inspired by Balzac's *The Human Comedy*, Zola set out to write what became a twenty-novel series entitled *Les Rougon-Macquart* (*The Rougon-Macquarts*).

Zola became associated with the painters Paul Cézanne (a boyhood friend) and Edouard Manet as well as the French Impressionist painters Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Pierre-August Renoir. He also became acquainted with major literary figures of the day including Gustave Flaubert, Edmond Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet, and Ivan Turgenev. In 1880 Zola oversaw the publication of a collection of short stories by six naturalist authors entitled *Les Soirées de Médan* (*Evenings at Médan*), after the location of his home at Médan, outside of Paris, where his circle of naturalists met.

In 1888 Zola became famous for his literary intervention in the Dreyfus Affair, a highly controversial political issue that dominated French political debates for twelve years. In an article entitled "J'Accuse" ("I Accuse"), Zola defended the rights of a Jewish military officer, Alfred Dreyfus, who had been falsely accused of espionage. Zola has since been celebrated as a champion against anti- Semitism and an important influence on French public opinion. Zola died of accidental asphyxiation in Paris, France, on September 29, 1902.

Representative Works

Anna Karenina

Anna Karenina (1875-1877), by the Russian realist writer Leo Tolstoy, is considered one of the greatest novels of all time. The story concerns the intrigues of three Russian families: the Oblonskys, the Karenins, and the Levins. In the Oblonsky family, the husband, Stiva, is unfaithful to his wife, Dolly. The Oblonskys are the subject of Tolstoy's famous opening line in *Anna Karenina*: "All happy families resemble each other; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

The Karenin family is disrupted when Anna Karenina (the feminine version of the last name Karenin) leaves her husband and child because of an affair she is having with Aleksey Vronsky, a young military officer. The third element of *Anna Karenina* concerns the young Konstantin Levin and his courtship of Dolly's sister Kitty. The character of Konstantin embodies one of Tolstoy's major philosophical values: that the best life is lived through the daily events of honest work, a stable family and domestic situation, and that intellectualizing about life is useless.

"Ball of Fat"

"Ball of Fat," originally "Boule de suif" is considered the masterpiece of Guy de Maupassant. "Ball of Fat" was first published in 1880 in *Les Soirees de Médan* (*Evenings at Médan*), a volume of stories by six different authors writing on the subject of the Franco-German war of 1870-1871. In "Ball of Fat," a prostitute is traveling by coach with several other passengers, all of them French, to flee German occupation of the city of Rouen. At first the other passengers are friendly with the prostitute because she has food which they want her to share with them. When they stop for the night at a hotel, a German military officer threatens to not let them continue their journey unless the prostitute satisfies his lust. Not wanting to consort with the enemy, the prostitute at first refuses to consent to his wishes. However, in order to ensure their own safe passage, the other passengers manipulate her into giving in to the German officer. Afterwards, the other passengers ostracize the prostitute for succumbing to the officer. "Ball of Fat" is a notable example of Maupassant's mastery at economical composition in the short story form.

Crime and Punishment

Prestupleniye i nakazaniye (1866; *Crime and Punishment*), by the Russian realist writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, is considered one of the greatest novels of all time. In *Crime and Punishment* a young intellectual, Raskolnikov, uses philosophical reasoning to justify his plan of murdering an old woman for her money. After the murder, however, Raskolnikov is filled with a sort of spiritual dread. Meanwhile, a detective who believes Raskolnikov to be the murderer manipulates him into confessing his crime. When Raskolnikov is

convicted and sent to prison in Siberia, the woman who loves him, Sonya Marmeladova, follows him to live near the prison. Influenced by Sonya, Raskolnikov experiences a religious conversion while in prison. Dostoevsky is celebrated for his detailed psychological study of the character Raskolnikov, tracing the complex and minute factors which motivate his crime.

David Copperfield

David Copperfield (1849-1850), by the English realist writer Charles Dickens, remains one of his most popular and most enduring novels as well as being the author's personal favorite. *David Copperfield* is a semi-autobiographical work in which Dickens used material from his own childhood and early adulthood to narrate the life of a fictional character. *David Copperfield* is most noted for the early chapters describing childhood experiences. Among these is a description of Dickens's experience of being taken out of school as a child to work in a factory in London while his father was imprisoned for unpaid debts. In *David Copperfield*, Dickens addresses the social injustices of urban poverty and industrial labor.

Germinal

The novel *Germinal* (1885) is considered the masterpiece of Émile Zola, a French realist writer and the originator of the school of Naturalism in literature. *Germinal* takes place in a mining town and portrays the socioeconomic tensions between the working-class miners and the upper-class mine owners. The novel depicts the effects of a workers' strike on the mining community and addresses major political theories of the day, such as Marxism, socialism, and trade unionism. Zola uses the metaphor of a monster to describe the coal mine, which devours the workers who enter it. In *Germinal*, Zola accurately represents the conditions of the two separate social spheres as well as tackling important political debates regarding inequalities in socioeconomic class.

A Hazard of New Fortunes

A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890), by the foremost American realist writer, William Dean Howells, is regarded as one of his most important novels. *A Hazard of New Fortunes* takes place in New York City and concerns a group of people trying to start a magazine. Howells was inspired by his reading of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* to write a long novel, wide in scope and containing many characters. The result includes fifteen major characters and is notable for Howells's depiction of many sectors of society in New York City during the 1890s as well as his rendering of the flow of life in a city teeming with people. Howells expressed strong socialist views in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, and many of the characters represent differing points on the spectrum of American political opinion.

The Human Comedy

The Human Comedy, originally *La Comédie humaine* (1842-1855), is the collective title for a grouping of some ninety novels and novellas by Honoré de Balzac. In his fiction, Balzac portrays all levels of French society with impressive accuracy. He is noted for the vast number of different characters created in his fiction, numbering some three thousand throughout *The Human Comedy*. Balzac introduced the literary device of including many of the same characters in several different novels. In managing this diverse range of characters, Balzac was a master of characterization, portraying in minute detail the psychological and sociological minutiae that make up each individual's personality and determine his or her actions. *The Human Comedy* addresses themes of socioeconomic class, ambition, and obsession.

Madame Bovary

Madame Bovary (1857), by Gustave Flaubert, is considered to be the cornerstone of realist fiction and one of the most eminent novels ever written. *Madame Bovary* is the story of a middle-class woman whose extramarital affairs lead to tragedy. *Madame Bovary* was first published in installments in a magazine in 1856. In 1857 Flaubert was taken to court by the French government on the grounds that the story was considered immoral. However, his lawyer convincingly defended his case and *Madame Bovary* was published in book form soon afterward. The novel is noted for Flaubert's narrative objectivity and the psychological detail by which he accounts for the course of events initiated by his characters.

Middlemarch

Middlemarch (1871-1872), by George Eliot, is considered the masterpiece of a major English realist writer and one of the greatest novels of all time. *Middlemarch* is set in a small fictional town in rural England and is noted for the detail with which Eliot depicts characters from all walks of life. While *Middlemarch* includes many major characters, the central figure of the story is Dorothea, a young woman who marries an older clergyman and religious scholar because she hopes to do something meaningful with her life. One of Eliot's major themes throughout the novel concerns the idea that the seemingly insignificant lives of seemingly insignificant individuals can have a profound effect on the people around them. *Middlemarch* is considered a landmark in the development of the novel, elevating the form to a higher level of intellectual complexity.

Critical Overview

The realist movement in literature had a broadsweeping and profound affect on international literature throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century.

Many realist novelists were nationally and internationally recognized, within their lifetimes, to be among the greatest writers of the century. The public reception of many major realist novels was overwhelmingly positive. In general, realist novels were commercially successful throughout France, Russia, and England, to the extent that many major realist writers were able to support themselves entirely from the proceeds of their publications. In England, Dickens achieved unprecedented, and perhaps unsurpassed, popularity with the public. In Russia, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy were widely revered for their literary accomplishments. In France, Balzac, Maupassant, Flaubert, and Zola were all recognized as major literary figures.

Yet, while many realist novels were popular with the reading public, the unabashed view of contemporary society and unadorned representation of contemporary culture expressed by the realists were criticized in some corners as indecent and morally repugnant. In France, for example, the forces of government censorship stepped in to prosecute Flaubert for the publication of *Madame Bovary*, a tale of marital infidelity, based on the grounds that it violated what are considered laws of morality and decency. In a court of law, however, Flaubert's novel was found not guilty, and the scandal only increased the book's popularity.

Realist writers are widely celebrated for their mastery of objective, third-person narration. C. P. Snow, in *The Realists*, has described the powerful, "intelligent" narrative voice and sociological accuracy of realist novels as their most prominent contribution to literature. Snow observes, in *The Realists: Eight Portraits*, that "In great realistic novels, there is a presiding, unconcealed interpreting intelligence," by which the fictional characters are "examined with the writer's psychological resources and with cognitive intelligence." By contrast, some critics of the late-twentieth century have pointed out that the realist's ideal of narrative objectivity is belied by the personal style and subjective attitudes of the individual novelists. These commentators argue that the very notion of individual narration style implies the imprint of the author's subjective perceptions on the work he produces.

Many realist novels are considered to be reliable sociocultural documents of nineteenth-century society. Critics consistently praise the realists for their success in accurately representing all aspects of society, culture, and politics contemporary to their own. Critics often point to the work of Balzac as a representative example of this aspect of realist literature. Snow applies such statements in regard to Balzac to the entire body of realist fiction:

Engels said that Balzac told us more of the nature of
French society in his time than all the sociologists,

political thinkers, historical writers in the world. The same could be said of other realists as they dealt with their time and place.

In addition to literature, Realism has exerted a profound and widespread impact on many aspects of twentieth-century thought, including religion, philosophy, and psychology. Realist writers, particularly Flaubert and Dostoevsky, are celebrated for their acute attention to the complexities of human psychology and the many factors contributing to human motivation. Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychology, attributed his own theories in part to the influence of Dostoevsky's psychological novels. In the mid-twentieth century, the pacifism espoused by Tolstoy in his novels profoundly influenced Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of India's nonviolent movement for national independence.

Throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, the major realist novelists continue to be regarded as some of the greatest writers ever to have lived, and their masterpieces among the greatest literary accomplishments of all time. However, the value of the realistic aesthetic to literature of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has become a topic of heated debate among contemporary literary critics. In a 1989 article, "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast," published in *Harper's* magazine, novelist Tom Wolfe observed that, beginning in 1960, Realism fell out of fashion as a literary aesthetic in the United States. Wolfe traced the decline of Realism in American fiction, commenting, "By the early 1960s, the notion of the death of the realistic novel had caught on among young American writers with the force of a revelation." Wolfe, however, offered a counter argument to this antirealistic trend in American literature, asserting that a return to Realism in fiction, based on journalistic observations of contemporary life, is essential to the continuing vitality of American literature. Referring to the journalistic efforts of the nineteenth-century realist writers, Wolfe commented, "Dickens, Dostoyevski, Balzac, Zola, and Sinclair Lewis assumed that the novelist had to go beyond his personal experience and head out into society as a reporter." It is this sociocultural, journalistic quality of realist fiction, Wolfe argued, that continues to be an essential ingredient of great fiction today. Wolfe asserted:

At this weak, pale, tabescent moment in the history
of American literature, we need a battalion, a brigade,
of Zolas to head out into this wild, bizarre, unpredictable,
Hogstomping Baroque country of ours and
reclaim it as literary property.

Many critics have since responded, both positively and negatively, to Wolfe's landmark statement on the continuing value of Realism to the vitality of literature.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4
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Critical Essay #1

Brent has a Ph.D. in American culture and works as a freelance writer. In this essay, Brent discusses the realist movement in theater and drama.

Critical Essay #2

The realist movement in literature had a profound influence on all aspects of dramatic writing and theatrical production during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Realist theater moved away from exaggerated acting styles and overblown melodrama to create theatrical productions truer to the lives of the people in the audience. The major realist playwrights treated subjects of middle-class life in everyday, contemporary settings, featuring characters that face circumstances akin to those of average people. The term Realism, when applied to theater, is often used interchangeably with Naturalism.

Zola inaugurated the development of realist theater throughout Europe when, in 1867, he declared the need for a new type of theatrical production that eliminated artificiality and sought to accurately reproduce the details of daily life. His play *Therese Raquin*, a theatrical production of his 1867 novel, was produced on the stage in 1873 and marks the beginning of realist theater. Interestingly, several of the French authors who became major writers of realist fiction were failures as playwrights. Flaubert, Turgenev, Goncourt, and Daudet all wrote plays that failed in theatrical production. As a result, they jokingly gave themselves the epithet *auteurs sifflés*, meaning "hissed authors," because their plays were so bad they got hissed off the stage by disgruntled audiences. Nonetheless, the realist movement in literature gave rise to some of the greatest playwrights and most celebrated plays in history.

Critical Essay #3

The realist movement led to major changes in the dialogue written by playwrights and the manner in which actors delivered their dialogue. Playwrights began to write dialogue in a more natural style that mirrored the casual speech patterns of everyday conversation rather than the stilted, formalized speech of traditional theater. They addressed serious dramatic themes with plays set in contemporary times and concerning characters from everyday life. Realist playwrights often raised public controversy by addressing taboo social issues, such as marital infidelity and venereal disease. The greatest realist playwrights include Anton Chekhov and Maxim Gorky in Russia, August Strindberg in Sweden, and Henrik Ibsen in Norway. Other realist playwrights of note include Henry Becque, Eugene Brieux, and Georges Porto-Riche in France, Gerhart Hauptmann in Germany, and B. M. Bjornson in Norway.

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) was the foremost Russian realist playwright of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Chekhov wrote in naturalistic detail about the uneventful lives of the Russian landed gentry in an era of economic and social decline. His play *The Seagull* was first performed in 1896, when it was so unfavorably received that it was nearly hissed off the stage. However, when the Moscow Art Theater performed *The Seagull* two years later, applying newly developed principles of realist acting and staging to their production, it was an immediate success. Chekhov's other major realist plays include *Uncle Vanya* (1896), *Three Sisters* (1901), and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), the latter two written specifically for the Moscow Art Theater. Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) was another major Russian realist playwright. His most celebrated play, *The Lower Depths* (1902), concerns a character from the lower echelons of Russian society.

Two Scandinavian playwrights, Ibsen (1828- 1906) and Strindberg (1848-1912), are among the most celebrated realist dramatists of their time. Ibsen wrote realist plays concerning dark moral undercurrents running beneath the placid, mundane surface of middle-class family life. He addressed such topics as infidelity, suicide, and syphilis in plays that were criticized in his home country as morally depraved but celebrated throughout Europe as masterpieces of realist drama. Ibsen's major plays include *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), and *The Master Builder* (1892). The Swedish playwright Strindberg is equally celebrated for his works of realist drama. In his plays, Strindberg attacked conventional society in harsh terms of biting social commentary. He is also noted for his stark psychological Realism and mastery of naturalistic dialogue. Strindberg's major realist plays include *The Father* (1887), *Miss Julie* (1888), and *Creditors* (1888).

Critical Essay #4

In accordance with the development of Realism, a number of small, private theaters were founded throughout Europe for the purpose of producing realist plays. The most influential of these new theaters were the *Théatre-Libre* ("Free Theater") in France, the *Freie Bühne* ("Free Stage") in Germany, The Independent Theatre Club in England, and the Moscow Art Theater in Russia.

The *Théatre-Libre* was founded in Paris in 1887 by Andre Antoine for the purpose of staging works of naturalist, or realist, drama. Antoine had been influenced by both the realist novels of Zola and the innovations of the Meiningen Theater Company in Germany. In its first season, the *Théatre- Libre* produced a set of one-act plays. With the production of a play by Tolstoy in the theater's second year, the *Théatre-Libre* became an international influence on the theater world. Works by many of the major realist playwrights from throughout Europe were showcased at this theater, including those of Becque, Brieux, Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann, Bjornson, and Porto-Riche. In less than ten years of its existence, the *Théatre-Libre* housed the production of some one hundred plays by fifty different playwrights. Although the *Théatre-Libre* eventually failed due to financial difficulties, Antoine went on to become an important film director in 1914.

In Berlin, the *Freie Bühne* theater, modeled after the *Théatre-Libre*, was founded in 1889 for the purpose of staging realist drama to a select private audience. The *Freie Bühne*, founded by Otto Brahm, staged plays by Ibsen, Hauptmann, Tolstoy, Zola, and Strindberg. Brahm's theatrical productions focused on the representation of everyday reality through naturalistic acting styles, dialogue, and set designs. Realist drama quickly caught on with the general public in Germany, and mainstream commercial theaters began to stage realist plays as well. In 1894 Brahm was made director of the Deutsche Theater and incorporated the *Freie Bühne* as an experimental division of this larger, established theater.

The Independent Theatre Club was founded in London in 1891 to produce works of realist drama. Jacob Grein, who founded the Independent Theatre Club, modeled it after the *Théatre-Libre* as a private theater catering to a small, select audience of writers and intellectuals. The Independent Theatre, as it is generally called, produced plays by Ibsen as well as by the English playwright and drama critic George Bernard Shaw. In 1891 the Independent Theatre was disbanded.

The Moscow Art Theater Company, founded in 1898, represents the pinnacle of realist theater. The Moscow Art Theater was founded by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich- Danchenko for the purpose of producing dramas in accordance with their ideals regarding realist theater. Stanislavsky became the head of the Moscow Art Theater and its defining artistic force. One of the earliest productions of the Moscow Art Theater was Chekhov's *The Seagull*. *The Seagull* had been a complete failure in a production several years earlier, because traditional production was not suited to Chekhov's realist play. Under the direction of Stanislavsky, however, *The Seagull* was

an instant success. Thereafter, the playwright Chekhov and The Moscow Art Theater under Stanislavsky became inextricably associated as representative of realist theater at its best. The Moscow Art Theater also produced the works of such major realist playwright's as Gorky, Hauptmann, and Tolstoy.

Critical Essay #5

To accommodate the realist play, a new style of acting was needed. Acting styles in realist theaters were thus altered, instructing actors to deliver their dialogue in a more naturalistic manner, rather than the exaggerated, melodramatic style of traditional stage acting. In order to accomplish this, Stanislavsky developed an innovative method of acting that emphasized the natural expression of emotion on the part of the actor. This new acting method, known as the Stanislavsky Method, or Method Acting, exerted a profound influence on theatrical and film acting of the twentieth century.

Changes in theatrical acting style were facilitated by the introduction in 1885 of electric lighting on the stage. Since 1825, stages had been illuminated with gas lighting, but the use of electric lighting made small gestures and facial expressions of the actors more readily visible to the audience. As a result, exaggerated styles in acting were no longer a technical necessity for communicating with the audience.

Critical Essay #6

The stagecraft of realist theater emphasized the representation of realistic details from everyday life. Long-standing traditions of set design were thus altered by realist dramatists in the effort to move away from artificiality and toward Naturalism.

One of the first innovations of realist stage design was in the shape of the stage itself. Traditionally, stage sets did not reproduce the dimensions of actual rooms but included a backcloth and stage wings. Realist stage sets, however, began to include a "box" shape, reproducing the dimensions of an actual room, with a ceiling and three walls□the fourth wall being open to face the audience. The first "box set" stage design was utilized by English actress and singer Madame Vestris in 1832.

Realist set design, costuming, and use of props were further characterized by excessive attention to the reproduction of realistic details from everyday life. The *Théatre-Libre* included in one production real meat hanging from hooks during a scene set in a butcher shop. The realist productions of the English dramatist T. W. Robertson came to be called "cup-and-saucer" dramas, because they often included scenes of family meals in which the actors actually ate. Other realist productions included live animals. The American producer David Belasco, for example, once brought a real flock of sheep onto stage in a religious play.

Although the dominant works of realist literature were novels, the innovations of realist theater during the 1880s and 1890s exerted a profound and lasting influence on all aspects of playwriting and theatrical production throughout the twentieth century.

Source: Liz Brent, Critical Essay on Realism, in *Literary Movements for Students*, The Gale Group, 2003.

Critical Essay #7

In the following introduction to her Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Byerly explores how Victorian novelists evoked and resolved the arts and their influence in realist novels.*

By rejecting reality□and this is not a form of escapism
but an inherent quality of art□art vindicates
reality. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*

Fin de siècle American culture is often criticized for its refusal to distinguish between reality and fiction, between fact and artifact. "Reality television" programs hire crime and accident victims to reenact burglaries, fires, and dramatic rescues. "Fictionalized" biographies turn historical figures into novel characters by inventing thoughts and dialogue. Movies about current events go into production before the events themselves have reached a conclusion. Television commercials mimic the daily life of consumers, a life of comparing and choosing, with music and images that impart aesthetic glamour to the ordinary objects at hand. All of these things suggest a blurring of the boundary between art and reality that is sometimes linked to a commensurate blurring of moral boundaries. Our capacity to respond appropriately to real problems, some fear, may be deadened by excessive exposure to simulated reality. This makes it easy to feel a certain nostalgia for a time when reality commanded respect and art knew its place.

It is precisely because contemporary media are capable of a vividness that far exceeds what can be achieved through the written word that consumers have become somewhat suspicious of representations that threaten to supplant the reality they depict. The advent of "virtual reality" could immure us in purely subjective worlds, depriving us of interest in whatever common ground stands outside representation. It is with a shock of recognition, therefore, that we perceive Victorian qualms about their own most popular art forms. The rise of "realism" in nineteenth-century British literature and art shows how highly the Victorians valued art's mimetic capacity. But the Victorians also saw that art could be turned from a reflection of reality into a substitute for reality; it could act as either a powerful diagnostic tool or as a placebo. At the same time that they lauded the honest portrayal of ordinary life in art, the Victorians created museums and collections that segregated the objects of their aesthetic interest from the world of ordinary things. For art to retain its power and prestige, it had to be recognized as "art," and not confused with anything else. (As others have pointed out, if art were functionally equivalent to reality, there would be no need of it.) At the same time, the artifact's relation to the real world had to be perspicuous and authentic.

Victorian novels are famously self-conscious about their status as artifacts. While earlier novels often masqueraded as "real" narratives such as letters or journals, the Victorian novel sought credibility by admitting to its own artifice. Like the actor in the television commercial who admits, "I'm not a doctor, although I play one on TV," the Victorian narrator reinforces his or her authority with disarming candor about the nature of his

role. The world described by such a narrator is not the real world, but it is the next best thing to it.

The question faced by these novelists—how can art evoke reality while acknowledging its difference from the real world?—was, I will argue, resolved through their obsessive analysis and display of art's many guises. This book confronts a stunning paradox in the classic Victorian realist novel. A "realist" novel, according to most conventional definitions, might be expected to exclude, even condemn artifice, while mirroring the most ordinary and natural of human experiences. And yet the arts assume a prominent place in so many of the Victorian novels usually labeled "realist" that their presence seems almost a defining characteristic of the genre. As we will see, the novels of Charlotte Brontë, William Thackeray, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy are filled with both explicit references to artworks that have a function within the narrative—portraits, caricatures, charades, musical performances—and metaphors that implicitly compare the novelist's own representation to specific forms of art. Insistent reminders of the disjunction between art and life, these artistic references threaten to sabotage the realist claim to unmediated representation. Such persistent allusions to art must, it would seem, have a purpose beyond mere decoration in order to be worth the risk.

By disentangling the various meanings the Victorians attached to representation in all its forms, this book attempts to account for the way in which Victorian novelists were able simultaneously to deplore and exploit the idea of the aesthetic. At first, their novels seem wholly suspicious of art. In Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847-8) and Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853), for example, art possesses a dangerous power that can be easily exploited. Becky Sharp's considerable talents are used only to deceive, yet she evades moral judgment by deliberately inviting aesthetic judgment of herself. Many of George Eliot's and Thomas Hardy's characters present themselves as art objects in order to disguise their human flaws, or use the mesmerizing power of music to entrap a listener who mistakenly equates musical expression with depth of feeling. But in spite of this apparent distrust of art, these writers often describe the novelist's work as "drawing a picture," "painting a portrait," or "sketching a scene." They illustrate characters and situations by referring to works of visual art and denote emotions through allusion to music. Although painterly terms were used conventionally by nineteenth-century literary critics, these novelists employ them not as mere elegant variations on words like "describe" and "represent," but as a way of consciously invoking a non-literary mode of description and representation.

Artistic allusion has often been seen as a sort of literary dandyism, an old-fashioned and somewhat precious "dressing up" of a particular scene, character, or theme. Its most obvious function is to highlight a particular moment in the text. It also could be said to exhibit the author's superior knowledge and taste. But "art" is not necessary to accomplish these goals. Other techniques of elaborate, lyrical description can intensify the reader's perceptions; other realms of cultural discourse can verify the novelist's expertise. It must be asked, then, what evocations of art accomplish that other forms of allusion do not.

It may seem strange to consider what, in this context, art is "there for," since art is conventionally defined by its uselessness. It is customary to consider art to be anything that is created primarily for aesthetic appreciation, rather than something created to serve another function. Ordinary objects become artworks only when they are removed from their everyday use and displayed or commented upon *as* art. But as Theodor Adorno points out, the creation of art involves a "purposefulness" that contradicts the supposed purposelessness of its existence: "Art as akin to production cannot escape the question 'what for?' which it aims to negate" (*Minima Moralia*). Art forces us to take notice of its unique status as art, and to account for its presence. Artistic allusion in the novel attempts to confer on particular passages the autonomy and uniqueness of the artifact. No other form of cultural reference separates itself so decisively from the world in which it is embedded□even when this world is a fictional one.

While artistic allusions might seem like ostentatious displays of descriptive virtuosity on the narrator's part, in fact they tend to efface the narrative voice: because a picture cannot directly assert anything, a narrative "painting" does not seem like part of the narrator's commentary. It achieves a kind of independence from the narrative as a whole. Through this alterity the Victorian novel's preoccupation with art actually reinforces its claims to realism. As Barbara Herrnstein Smith points out, utterances or representations that are to be "taken as . . . fictive discourse" (*Margins of Discourse*) can be separated from "natural discourse" by "an act of artistry no more strenuous than placing a frame around them." By framing a person or a scene as an artwork, the author separates it from the world of the novel, performing what Barthes would call an act of "découpage," or cutting out (*Image Music Text*). The hole thus created in the text allows the image to escape into a different sign system, and by labeling this other world "art," the novelist makes the world left behind seem more real. Françoise Meltzer's definition of the literary portrait as "an insurmountable opacity," a "radical otherness in the text" (*Salomé*), applies equally to the other artifacts and performances represented in the Victorian novel. Their primary function is to be ontologically different from the world in which we find them.

Realism itself grew out of the impulse to contradict: as George Levine explains in the classic modern study of Victorian realism, realism "defines itself against the excesses, both stylistic and narrative, of various kinds of romantic, exotic, or sensational literatures" (*Realistic Imagination*). Because it is based on the repudiation of literary genres, realism has always been difficult to characterize. Its Victorian founders were forced to rely on contrast with the movements they sought to negate. George Henry Lewes described realism as the antithesis of "Falsism," while Thomas Hardy distinguished it from mere "copyism." For George Eliot, realism meant *not* representing "things as they never have been and never will be," while Charlotte Brontë warned that readers who expect "anything like a romance" will find that they "were never more mistaken." And yet this sort of opposition is potentially reductive, leading to what J. Hillis Miller calls "the sterile oscillations of the traditional paradigm of realism" ("Literary Theory"). He points out that "criticism in this area tends to express itself in either/or dichotomies: either realism or vacuous, free-floating fiction . . . either the representation of some verifiable and objective truth, or the merely relative, some partial, subjective truth, therefore no truth at all."

These sorts of distinctions can slice both ways. Recent theorists have tended to oppose "naive realism" to the elaborately self-conscious modern fiction that seems both more true to the ambiguities of existence and more truthful in its awareness of its own dependence on language. Realism thus becomes, in Bruce Robbins' words, a "scapegoat term" that is useful in generating arguments because of the "blatant strawmanism" that renders it an easy target ("Modernism"). Whichever side of the equation is valorized, the inadequacy of a simple opposition between true and false, real and unreal, is obvious. It is reflected in the use of the term "realistic" to denote things that seem real but are not, and the recourse to a neologism, "irreal," by writers as diverse as philosopher Nelson Goodman and science fiction writer Philip K. Dick.

The literary problem parallels a larger philosophical debate. Just as realistic fiction can be regarded as a construction that depends on the relative status of its internal constituents, so our sense of the real world, some philosophers suggest, derives from our perception of the relation between key elements. But philosophical realism, like literary realism, seems to be plagued by "reductive dichotomies," as N. Katharine Hayles has recently noted ("Constrained Constructivism"). Hayles suggests that "the binary logic of true/false" is inadequate to the spectrum of possibilities contained within the concept of mental representation, which permits things to be "consistent or inconsistent" as well as "congruent or incongruent" with reality: "Realism tends to elide the differences [among these terms] . . . assimilating not-false into true and not-true into false." The philosopher Hilary Putnam has argued for the rejection of such dichotomies as "subjective/objective," "projection/property of the thing in itself" and "power/property of the thing in itself" (*Many Faces of Realism*), but asks, "*can* one be any sort of realist without the dichotomies?" If belief in the stable presence of a real world means that one must be able, confidently, to label phenomena as real (objects) or unreal (projections), then a whole spectrum of experience becomes impossible to describe. Victorian novelists, however, wished to illuminate precisely this space, and meticulously rendered the ambiguity of perception by filtering it through the multifaceted prism of art.

The novelists studied here use the category of "art" to create a sphere of "radical otherness" within their texts, an artificial realm that is poised against an underlying "reality." The world thus created, however, is multidimensional. The density, sophistication, and credibility of the fictional world depends, not upon a simple binary opposition between art and not-art, but upon the representational array created by the novelists' invocation of *multiple* arts. The association of literature with other "sister arts" was a common trope from the Renaissance onward, but such conventional allusions to painting or music claimed aesthetic similarity between a single art form and the art of poetry. Thackeray, Brontë, Eliot, and Hardy use a wide range of arts in combination, creating a complex system of aesthetic cross-referencing. Each art is eventually assigned a different moral value, creating a hierarchy of the arts that privileges music over what come to be seen as the more limited perspective of painting and the more deceptive mode of theater. However, taken together, their collective gesture is to provide a coherent model of realistic representation. The juxtaposition of painting, theater, and music in these novels has the effect of measuring the arts' representational abilities not against external reality but against each other. The realism of the novelist's

own creation is evaluated within this framework, rather than in relation to an actual reality with which it cannot hope to compete.

The effect of "aesthetic cross-referencing" is to give coherence and unity to fictional worlds by constructing different levels of representation within them. This operation is similar to the way in which we make sense of the world around us, since, as Arthur Danto points out, "coherence is taken to be the defining property of reality" (*Connections to the World*). The process whereby we construct reality by "tak[ing] as true the largest set of self-coherent ideas" (Danto, *Connections to the World*) allows us to perceive fictional worlds, which are necessarily characterized by "incompleteness" (Pavel, *Fictional Worlds*), as nonetheless coherent, even robust. Here I attempt to unravel the process of "taking as true," or, in Herrnstein Smith's words, "taking as natural." As these expressions suggest, our ability to extract a real-seeming world from between the cardboard covers of a book depends upon the apparently casual, almost unconscious, assumptions we make. Michael Riffaterre has suggested that "a metalanguage functions as if it presupposed the reality of the topics it glosses, when it actually presupposes the reality of the language in which these topics are broached" (*Fictional Truth*). The artistic metaphors I examine function as just such a metalanguage. They become what Riffaterre calls "fictional indices," tropes that "presuppose the real." The novelist is exempted from the impossible task of describing the real world in all its complexity; instead, s/he describes representations that are judged accurate or inadequate *as representations* of a reality that is implied by their reference to it. The representations themselves attest to the presence of an ontologically prior world.

The fictional worlds generated by these novelists are thus both coherent and autonomous. If they are so similar to the real world, how exactly do they differ from it? One could argue that the main difference, from the reader's point of view, is that they happen not to exist. The fact that a world can be represented through the novelist's language suggests merely that it *could* exist. However, the fact that a world is so fully constituted that it can be *re*-represented through allusions to other art forms suggests that it *does* exist. Of course, this suggestion need not be accepted. Clearly, belief in the existence of "Wessex," "Labassecour," or "Pumpernickel" would be a mistake. As Thomas Pavel suggests, "fiction cannot be strictly identified with metaphysically possible worlds" (*Fictional Worlds*). But these novels create, if not possible worlds, then plausible ones.

Nelson Goodman's suggestion that instead of asking, "What is art?," we should more properly inquire "When is art?," underlies my inquiry throughout. Within the contexts of these fictional worlds, I ask, when is art? And how do we know? And, moreover, *why* is art? What do these novelists gain that is worth the evident riskiness of reminding the reader how deceptive or inadequate art can be? All use particular forms of art to signal hypocrisy, self-delusion, deceit, or simply the difficulty of understanding a world of multiple consciousnesses and rendering it accurately. But this admission of art's failures does not render the novelist's own art more suspect: like the informant who fingers a fellow criminal, the novelist accommodates our sophisticated doubts about

representation by forcing someone else to take the fall. The novel, witness to the potential dangers of our attempts to represent and manipulate reality, gets off scot-free.

Recent critics have tended to see the kind of framing or detachment I have described as an ideological rather than purely aesthetic gesture. Fredric Jameson suggests that such "aestheticizing strateg[ies]" (*Political Unconscious*) have the power, through a "process of abstraction and reification," to transform a passage or scene into "an artcommodity which one consumes by way of its own dynamic." If such passages are considered to be in some sense equivalent to actual artworks, then Pierre Bourdieu's claim that aesthetic "consumption" is "an act of deciphering . . . which implies the implementation of a . . . cultural code" (*Distinction*) would suggest that one function of artworks within a novel is to illustrate or even interrogate the process of cultural encoding. Bourdieu argues that the "'pure gaze'" is a "historical invention" intended to disguise the fact that "aesthetic perception is necessarily historical, inasmuch as it is differential, relational, attentive to the deviations (*écarts*) which make styles." Bourdieu insists that aesthetic judgment is a social act whose purpose is differentiation or distinction between classes. A novel that evokes artifacts, then, is able to create a multilayered social world by showing different characters' participation in aesthetic judgment.

Of course, the novel may also be said to situate *itself* in relation to class through its deployment of artistic references. If artistic allusion is considered to be a kind of metalanguage, as I have suggested, then we must question whether it is what Bakhtin calls a "unitary language" that reflects "historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization" (*Dialogic Imagination*), or whether its presence within the narrative contributes to the novel's "heteroglossia," as it enters into dialogue with the text in which it is embedded. Mieke Bal suggests that "realism" is in conflict with a "textualism" that seeks to replace the "self-evident wholeness" of traditional realism with a "self-conscious construction of wholeness" ("De-disciplining the Eye"). She sees its "'convention of unity'" as "a powerful ideological weapon because of the pressure it exerts on the reader to choose one interpretation over another . . . it encourages the projection of 'masterplots' that colonize or erase the marginal." Aesthetic cross-referencing participates in this productive conflict: it is a form of "self-conscious construction" that creates a "self-evidently" coherent and autonomous fictional world. Ultimately, I would argue, the use of art in these novels contributes to a realism characterized by formal, but not necessarily ideological, coherence. The novelists' self-consciousness about aesthetic representation is often paralleled by self-consciousness about social representation and the role of aesthetics in the constitution of culture.

This is the "singular anomaly" of the Victorian realist novel: the emphasis on aesthetics that is integral to its exploration of social and cultural values. Michèle Barrett has recently complained about the "marginalization of aesthetic questions in the interpretation of culture" ("Max Raphael"), and while she refers specifically to the application of aesthetic standards of texts of cultural interest, her comments apply equally to the need to examine aesthetic judgments that occur within texts themselves in relation to the culture they describe. It seems appropriate, then, for this book to answer the formalist question with which it begins—how do these artistic references function within these text?—with the help of sources that illuminate relevant ancillary

topics in nineteenth-century British culture: the tension between the picturesque aesthetic and agricultural development; the tainted position of actresses in Victorian society; the xenophobic response to foreign musicians in England; the competition between traditional parish choirs and modern church organists in rural society; the connection between public executions and other forms of spectacle. Victorian novels not only describe, they *enact* the process whereby the drawing of aesthetic boundaries takes on moral and political dimensions.

The representational play afforded by the Victorian use of multiple arts was set in motion by Romantic explorations of painting and music as alternative models for poetry. In chapter I, "The Picturesque Aesthetic and the Natural Art of Song," I argue that the Romantics used first metaphors of painting and then metaphors of music to blur the boundary between nature and art, breaking down those time-honored categories in a way that would allow the Victorians to recast the problem as an opposition between "real" and "false." The picturesque descriptions that appear in the works of Leigh Hunt, William Lisle Bowles, Thomas De Quincey, and the early Wordsworth treat natural scenes as a kind of "found art" whose apparent origin in nature authenticates the feelings that they metaphorically describe. But while the picturesque presented itself as a purely aesthetic mode of perceiving landscape, it was subtended by a political agenda that ultimately destroyed its nostalgic claims to ahistoricity. Later Romantic writing used the picturesque as a form of critique, and finally replaced it with music, a fully engaged mode of artistic communication that involves living bodies that sing and are penetrated by song.

The leap from a non-mimetic art like music to Victorian "word-painting" might seem a large one. But by using music to represent a literature that was both grounded in nature and an autonomous form of art, the Romantics laid the foundation on which realist novels would be built. Unlike the picturesque aesthetic, the musical aesthetic developed in the later poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats does not attempt to deny its temporality. Emanating from the land□its winds, waters, and birds□it transcends material contingency as it transcends language itself. Music, like the picturesque, works to elide the difference between nature and art, but by weighing a different end of the equation. While the function of picturesque tropes is to aestheticize nature, the function of musical tropes is to naturalize art.

The Romantic empowerment of art rendered it both fascinating and dangerous to the Victorians. The myth of genuine self-expression embodied in the poetic ideal of music seemed problematic to early Victorian novelists, who saw a social world constituted not by authentic expression but by deliberate hypocrisy. Chapter 2, "Masterpiece Theatres: Art as Spectacle in William Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë," traces the transformation of the essentially aesthetic questions raised by the Romantics into cultural questions about the relationship between artistic representations and social reality. The novels of William Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë use art□all of the arts, including music □as a metaphor for the social façade that is too easily mistaken for inner truth. Art's relation to reality in these novels is often characterized as "theatrical": that is, art signifies a deliberate effort to "make up" people and situations, disguising their true import. The public danger implicit in the coerciveness of the theatrical spectacle, vividly rendered in

Thackeray's essay about the hanging of the murderer Courvoisier, is reflected in the novels' emphasis upon the perils of representation.

Theater is not the only art that is guilty of theatricality. In *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette*, overtly theatrical performances are paralleled by equally deceptive instances of singing, dancing, and drawing. By invoking all of these arts, Thackeray and Brontë suggest that the crucial difference is not between one medium and another, but between false art and true. While the Romantics compared the formal capabilites of different media and genres, Thackeray and Brontë shifted attention from the beauty or accuracy of an "imitation" to its authenticity, a quality more dependent on the artist than on the medium. This deflection was crucial to the development of the novel, a form constantly beset by directives about what it could and could not represent. By freeing the arts from the positions they had long been assigned on the basis of their formal capabilities, Thackeray and Brontë initiated the development of a new artistic hierarchy, one based on moral, rather than aesthetic, considerations. Their separation of the world into layers of truth and illusion was the first step toward realism in nineteenth-century English literature.

George Eliot, who was interested not only in how we represent ourselves to the world but how we represent ourselves to ourselves, used the wide range of arts introduced into the novel by Thackeray and Brontë to set up a representational system that reflects the many strata of deception and selfdeception that can separate inner reality from outer expression. Chapter 3, "George Eliot's Hierarchy of Representation," shows that in Eliot's novels the association of individual characters with specific arts produces a moral hierarchy in which visual art is exposed as a detached and static simplification of reality, theatrical art is linked with a dangerous deception of self and others, and music alone is capable of representing truth.

This hierarchy is strangely at odds with the novelist's own metaphoric language. Richly pictorial descriptions have a positive, even essential, function within Eliot's novels. Theatrical terminology and dramatic staging of scenes testify to the lessons Eliot learned from the theater. Most astonishingly, music, the very art that symbolizes genuine communication, is the one art that Eliot never uses as a metaphor for her own. This apparent contradiction suggests that Eliot's hierarchy does not reflect an intrinsic privileging of any one form of art, but is a carefully constructed representational code. This code enables each of Eliot's novels to constitute a world of its own□a world that does not reproduce reality, but resembles it in the dense materiality that its autonomy engenders.

The book's final chapter, "Art Works: Thomas Hardy and the Labor of Creation," explores Thomas Hardy's confident appropriation of the artistic metaphors that seemed so disturbing to earlier novelists. In the eight novels written between 1872 and 1896, from *Under the Greenwood Tree* to *Jude the Obscure*, aesthetic appreciation is treated not as a dangerously limited perspective but as a discerning response to natural beauty. Hardy uses painting to represent the trustworthy surface of things, music to reflect his characters' inner responsiveness to people and places, and architecture to give concrete form to cultural memory. Theater alone bears the burden of representing

misrepresentation. While Eliot's "word-painting" usually consists of generalized evocations of genres like the portrait or the domestic interior, Hardy's famous pictorialism involves brief and numerous references to specific painters and paintings. His allusions suggest not just resemblance but equivalence between his characters or scenes and those depicted in great paintings, as he claims for his simple rural subjects an aesthetic value equal to that of high art.

In spite of his highly aestheticized view of reality, Hardy's evaluation of any medium or artifact is based not on conventionally "aesthetic" criteria, but on its place in the life of the community. He does not focus on art objects, but on artistic creation itself, and the strenuous labor it involves. Where the Romantics had prized art as an apparently effortless manifestation of spontaneous feeling, Hardy depicts art as a product of skill, hard work, and tradition. Art is no longer opposed to life□to gritty, material reality; it is incorporated into it through Hardy's vision of a world in which the transcendent beauty of creation is immanent in the mundane work of existence.

Ironically, the moral aesthetic generated by these novelists' representations of the arts helped pave the way for Aestheticism, a movement that denied any moral obligations on the part of the artist. In a brief coda, "Aestheticism: The Erasure of the Real," I show how the boundaries separating different forms of art, so carefully outlined by Eliot and Hardy, are conflated in the works of Wilde and Pater. All arts become alike in their potential for aesthetic gratification. Instead of disjunctive artistic moments that shake our sense of what is real, in a novel like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* we are faced with a story that is nothing but art from beginning to end. Romantic texts took an aesthetic view of objects such as mountains and lakes; Victorian novels extended the aesthetic perspective to particular people and situations; Aesthetic works make an artifact of life itself. The art/reality binary that energized the Victorian novel ultimately collapses under its own weight, leaving a black hole that absorbs moral and aesthetic considerations into its undifferentiated mass.

In Hardy's willingness to regard people and places as proper objects of aesthetic contemplation we see the modulation of the earnestness of the earlier Victorians into the decadence of the Aesthetes. Wilde's belief that "the type of all the arts is the art of the musician" and Pater's famous statement that "all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music" attest to the important lesson early Modernists learned from the Victorians: that music is, not the natural expression of the soul, but, for better or worse, the most artificial of arts. By exposing artifice at the level of expression once considered closest to the authentic self, an author risks calling into question the sincerity of his or her own narrative "voice."

The replacement of the Romantic pretense that art is natural by an open acknowledgment that art is fictive clearly places the realist project in jeopardy. Thackeray, Brontë, Eliot, and Hardy invoke the sister arts of literature in order to create worlds that acknowledge both true and false representation. The early Thackeray illustration "Rex, Ludovicus, Ludovicus Rex" shows that he understood the dangerous connection between representation and power. Thackeray's sequence of three drawings shows first the empty regalia of a king, then the pathetic figure of Louis himself, and

finally "Ludovicus Rex": the impressive symbol of imperial power that is produced by the superimposition of representation over reality. Art, these novelists admit, is a very risky business. But this confession removes their own art from the precarious realm of the aesthetic and places it in the world of the "real": a stable region where the testimony of neutral observers like themselves helps to keep the government honest.

Source: Alison Byerly, "Introduction," in *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 1-13.

Adaptations

The many realist novels of Charles Dickens have been adapted to film for theaters as well as for television in a variety of productions dating as far back as the 1930s. *David Copperfield* was adapted to film in 1935 (with George Cukor directing) and in 1970 (with Delbert Mann directing).

Many of Dickens's novels have been recorded on audiocassette. *David Copperfield* was recorded by Media Books Audio Publishing in 1999 with Ben Kingsley reading. In 2002, a twenty-six cassette edition was released by Audio Partners Publishing Corp. with Martin Jarvis as the reader.

The major works of Dostoevsky have also been adapted to film in several different productions as well as being recorded on audiocassette. *Crime and Punishment* was adapted to film in two different productions in 1935 (one of these a French production) as well as a Russian production in 1970.

An audiocassette recording of *Crime and Punishment* was read by Michael Sheen for Naxos of America in 1994.

Many of Eliot's novels have been adapted to film and recorded on audiocassette. *Middlemarch* was adapted to film as a made-for-television movie, directed by Anthony Page, in 1994.

Middlemarch, read by Nadia May, was recorded on audiocassette by Blackstone Audio Books in 1994.

Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* has been adapted to film many times. The first English version appeared in 1949 and was directed by Vincente Minnelli. Tim Fywell directed a made-fortelevision version in 2000.

Madame Bovary was recorded by New Millennium Audio, read by Glenda Jackson, in 2002.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* was adapted to film in 1935, starring Greta Garbo; in 1947, starring Vivien Leigh; in 1974, as a ballet; and in 1985, starring Christopher Reeve.

Anna Karenina was recorded on audiocassette by Bantam Books for the "BBC Radio Presents" series in 1999.

Topics for Further Study

The Parnassian poets were a major offshoot of the realist movement in literature. Research one of the following poets of the Parnassian movement: Leconte de Lisle, Albert Glatigny, Theodore de Banville, François Coppée, Leon Dierx, or Jose Maria de Heredia and provide a brief biography of this poet as well as an overview of his literary career and major works. Discuss how the poet empolys the elements of Realism in the poem.

The realist movement in literature was first inspired by the paintings of the French artist Gustave Courbet, particularly his paintings "The Stone-Breakers" and "Burial at Ornans." Learn more about the life and work of Courbet. Write an essay providing a biography of Courbet and overview of his artistic career. Then describe one of his paintings and explain the elements of Realism in the painting.

Realism in literature developed simultaneously with major developments in still photography during the second half of the nineteenth century. Research the history of photography between 1830 and 1900. What major technical discoveries and inventions characterized photography during this period? What types of photographs were being taken during this period? Find reproductions of early photographs from this period and discuss the style of photography in comparison to photography in your own time and culture.

Write a short story and apply the ideals and major stylistic elements of Realism to your fiction. Explain what elements of your story are in keeping with realist literature.

Compare and Contrast

1840-1900: France experiences several major changes of government. With the Revolution of 1848, France enters the era of the Second Republic. From 1852 until 1870, the French government is known as the Second Empire. After the revolution of 1871, France enters the era of the Third Republic which lasts until 1940. During the periods of Republic, all adult males in France are granted the right to vote in political elections. Women in France do not have the right to vote.

Today: Since 1959, the French government is known as the Fifth Republic, a constitutional democracy ruled by an elected president. Women as well as men have full voting rights. France is a member of the European Union, an organization of some fifteen European nations united by common economic and political interests to promote peace, security, and economic prosperity.

1850-1900: Russia is an empire ruled by a succession of autocratic czars. In 1861 a major societal reform is enacted with the emancipation of the serfs.

Today: Russia has recently emerged from the era of communist rule, which lasted from the revolution of 1917 until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Women and men have full voting rights. Since 1991 the former Soviet Union consists of some twelve independent nation states, of which Russia is the largest and most powerful. The nations of the former Soviet Union belong to a coalition known as the Commonwealth of Independent States.

1850-1900: England is ruled by a parliament and prime minister under a sovereign queen. As of 1833 slavery has been abolished in England. Various reform laws vastly expand the number of white men granted the right to vote. Women in England do not have the right to vote.

Today: England is ruled by a prime minister and parliament. The queen remains an important figurehead but holds little real political power. Women and men have full voting rights. England is a member of the European Union, a fifteenmember organization of European nations united by common social, economic, political, and security interests.

1850-1900: The United States is a constitutional democracy ruled by an elected president. It experiences major internal conflict during the Civil War. After the Civil War, slavery is abolished and all African-American men are granted the right to vote. Women do not have the right to vote.

Today: The United States government has remained a stable democracy since the revolution of 1776. Women and men have full voting rights.

What Do I Read Next?

Howells and the Age of Realism (1954), by Everett Carter, provides discussion of author and literary critic William Dean Howells and his significance to the development of Realism in American literature.

Kate Chopin is one of the most important realist writers of nineteenth-century fiction. Her most famous work is *The Awakening* (1899), a story about a woman's self-discovery and growing sexuality in the American South.

Introduction to Russian Realism (1965), by Ernest J. Simmons, is a collection of essays on Realism in Russian literature and includes essays on Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov.

The Alienation of Reason: A History of Positivist Thought (1968), by Leszek Kolakowski, provides a history of positivism in nineteenthcentury thought. Positivism was an important influence on the development of the realist movement in literature.

Mark Twain, the pen name for Samuel Langhorne Clemens, was a pioneer in the use of realistic speech patterns, notably through the use of dialectical speech. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer's Comrade* (1884) are good illustrations of his use of dialect.

Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth-Century Art (1984), by Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, offers discussion of Romanticism and Realism in nineteenth-century art.

"Middlemarch": A Novel of Reform (1988), by Bert G. Hornback, is a discussion of the political and social views represented in Eliot's realist masterpiece *Middlemarch*.

"War and Peace": Tolstoy's Mirror of the World (1995), by Rimvydas Silbajoris, provides critical discussion of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

Further Study

Brown, Frederick, *Zola: A Life*, Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1995.

Brown provides a biography of Émile Zola who was a preeminent writer of French realist fiction and the founder of the naturalist school of literature.

Hornback, Burt G., *"The Hero of My Life": Essays on Dickens*, Ohio University Press, 1981.

Hornback offers a series of essays in which he explains what Dickens has to teach readers about freedom, love, friendship, tragedy, and the powers of the imagination. Hornback focuses primarily on the novel *David Copperfield*, with additional discussion of *Our Mutual Friend* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Hughes, Kathryn, *George Eliot: The Last Victorian*, Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1998.

Hughes provides a biography of English realist novelist George Eliot in the context of English culture and society during the Victorian era.

Robb, Graham, *Balzac: A Life*, Norton, 1994.

In this biography, Robb provides extensive discussion of Balzac's novels in relation to the events of his life.

Thomas, Alan, *Time in a Frame: Photography and the Nineteenth- Century Mind*, Schocken Books, 1977.

Alan offers an overview of popular subject-matter in nineteenth-century photography, including individual and family portraiture, travel photography, historical documentation, landscapes, and daily life.

Wilson, A. N., *Tolstoy*, Norton, 1988.

Wilson provides a comprehensive biography of Russian realist novelist Leo Tolstoy.

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Pasco, Allan H., "Honoré de Balzac," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 119: *Nineteenth-Century French Fiction Writers: Romanticism and Realism, 1800-1860*, edited by Catharine Savage Brosman, Gale Research, 1992, pp. 3-33.

Snow, C. P., *The Realists: Eight Portraits*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978, p. xi.

Wolfe, Tom, "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast: A Literary Manifesto for the New Social Novel," in *Harper's*, November 1989, pp. 45-56.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Literary Movements for Students (LMfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, LMfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on

□classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of LMfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of LMfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in LMfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by LMfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

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A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

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