

"This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual--nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent."

*We're coming back to this quote later. Think about what it means....*

# Naturalism

**1890-1915ish**

# Naturalism

Naturalism grew out of the scientific ideas of objectivity and thus used the scientific method to write about humanity. This literary period was also influenced by Darwin's Theory of Evolution that presented ideas like "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest."

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- “human beasts” that were governed by heredity and social environment ( *College word--* ”milieu” - noun).
  - nothing spiritual separated people from animals
  - behavior is driven by instinct instead of reason
- “products of their environments” which needed to be considered without moralizing about their natures
  - Nature was ambivalent at best towards people OR hostile at worst  
at worst
- having little or no control over what happens to them
  - no free will. If you tried to exercise free will it was an illusion or futile
  - totally at the mercy of external forces and internal forces
    - There is discussion of fate and "hubris" that affect a character; generally the controlling force is society and the surrounding environment.
    - BUT a total rejection of supernatural forces
    - BUT Chance, Fate and Destiny are still in play

# College words and phrases of talking about Naturalism

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- Determinism
- Pessimism
- “Socio-economic determinism”
- “Pessimistic materialistic determinism”

# The Literature will be mostly this:

- The dull round of daily existence
- A LOT of animal imagery
- Setting matters
  - usually urban areas
  - factories

# The Literature will be mostly this:

- The commonplace and unheroic
  - Heroic or adventurous qualities (ex: such as acts of violence and passion which involve sexual adventure or bodily strength) culminate in desperate moments and violent death.
    - SOMETIMES they tried to keep people human as much as possible by giving them redeeming qualities to keep them individuals.
      - This makes the struggle for survival with dignity heroic.
      - The suggestion is that life on its lowest levels is not so simple as it seems to be.

# The Literature will be mostly this:

- Characters described as though they are conditioned and controlled by environment, heredity, instinct, or chance.
  - mostly from the lower middle or the lower classes - they are poor, uneducated, and unsophisticated.
  - Static



# The Literature will be mostly this:

- Conflict is character vs. society OR himself OR nature
  - Human beings unable to stand up against enormous weight of circumstances.
    - Deals with those raw and unpleasant experiences which reduce characters to "degrading" behavior in their struggle to survive.
    - Struggle to keep the "veneer of civilization" even though outside pressures that threaten to release the "brute within"
      - the "brute within" each individual, composed of strong and often warring emotions( passions, such as lust, greed, or the desire for dominance or pleasure) and the fight for survival in an amoral, indifferent universe.

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# Romantics vs Realism

Nature never did betray the heart that loved her

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