



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique

جامعة الجيلاي بونعامة خميس مليانة

Khemis Miliana - Université de Djilali Bounaama

كلية اللغات الأجنبية

Faculté des langues étrangères



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## مستخرج محضر اجتماع المجلس العلمي

بموجب محضر اجتماع المجلس العلمي لكلية اللغات الأجنبية في دورته العادية تحت رقم 02 المؤرخ في: 2026/04/25 و المتضمن ضمن جدول أعماله تشكيل لجنة خبراء المطبوع البيداغوجي، و بناء على التقارير المستلمة من طرف نيابة عمادة الكلية للبحث العلمي و العلاقات الخارجية للأساتذة التالية أسماؤهم:

- الأستاذ(ة): د. زحاف فاطمة الزهراء (جامعة خميس مليانة)

- الأستاذ(ة): د. البشير ياقوت (جامعة خميس مليانة)

- الأستاذ(ة): أ.د. عمارة نعيمة (جامعة الشلف)

وبعد الإطلاع على تقارير الخبراء تمت الموافقة على اعتماد مطبوع بيداغوجي في مقياس: Civilization of the Language of Study الموجه لفائدة طلبة السنة الأولى، تخصص: لغة إنجليزية، شعبة: لغة إنجليزية، من إعداد الأستاذة: سعيد هوارى  
أمال.

رئيس المجلس العلمي للكلية

زحاف فاطمة الزهراء  
رئيس المجلس العلمي للكلية  
كلية اللغات الأجنبية



The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Djilali Bounaama University, Khemis Meliana

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English

A Course in Literature:

**Study of Literary Texts of the Studied Language**

For Second Year Students

**Semester One**

Designed by:

Dr. Amal Said Houari

Academic Year: 2025/2026


## 1- Course Description

This course offers a systematic introduction to **major literary movements** that shaped modern literature, with a particular emphasis on English **Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism**.

Designed for **second-year undergraduate students (L2)**, the course combines **historical, theoretical, and textual approaches** to literature. Students will explore the social, philosophical, and aesthetic contexts that gave rise to these movements and will engage in **close reading** and **critical analysis** of selected literary texts.

The course aims to **develop students' analytical skills**, deepen their understanding of literary form and theme, and enhance their ability to situate literary works within broader intellectual and historical frameworks.

## 2- Teacher's Contact Information and Course Information:

<b>Djilali Bounaama University, Khmis Meliana</b> <b>Faculty of Foreign Languages</b> <b>Department of English</b>	
	
<b>Module</b>	<b>Literature</b>
<b>Teaching Modality</b>	<b>On-site</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>L2</b>
<b>Semester</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Credit</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Weekly Time Allotted</b>	<b>01 h 30</b>
<b>Teacher in charge</b>	<b>Dr. Amal Said Houari</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>a.said-houari@univ-dbkm.dz</b>

### 3- Learning Objectives

#### A- General Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Identify** the **defining characteristics** of major **literary movements**.
- **Understand** the historical, cultural, and philosophical **contexts** influencing **Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism**.
- **Analyse** literary texts using movement-specific **concepts** and **terminology**.
- **Compare and contrast** literary movements in terms of **themes, style, and ideology**.
- **Apply** close reading techniques to **poetry, fiction, and drama**.
- **Develop** coherent critical arguments in written and oral analyses of literary works.
- **Demonstrate** increased **awareness** of literature as a reflection of social and human experience.

#### B- Specific Objectives

##### 1- Historical and Contextual Understanding

- Identify the major historical, social, political, and philosophical contexts that gave rise to literary movements.
- Explain the text-context relationship.

##### 2- Conceptual and Theoretical Mastery

- Define Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism as literary movements.
- **Distinguish** between: Romantic imagination vs. Realist objectivity.
- **Understand** key theoretical concepts such as: Positivism, Determinism, Rationalism, Darwinism.

##### 3- Genre and Form Awareness

- Identify formal characteristics of: Romantic poetry, Realist novel, and Naturalist fiction.
- Understand narrative techniques such as: Omniscient narration, symbolism, detailed description, and psychological interiority.

##### 4- Research Skills

- Conduct basic literary research using scholarly sources.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- Evaluate academic credibility.

### 4- Pre-requisites

#### 1. Introduction to Literature (L1)

Students should have prior knowledge of:

- Basic literary genres
- Familiarity with fundamental literary terms and concepts
- Basic knowledge of Classicism and the Age of Reason

## 2. Introduction to Literary Analysis

Students should already be able to:

- Analyze short literary texts independently.
- Write structured analytical paragraphs.
- Use quotations properly (citation basics).

## 3. Academic Writing Skills

Students must demonstrate:

- Ability to write coherent academic paragraphs.
- Clear thesis statement.
- Logical organization of ideas.

## 4. Language Proficiency

Since the course involves complex theoretical and historical material, students should have:

- Intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency in English.
- Ability to read literary texts.
- Understanding of academic lectures.
- Ability to participate in class discussions

## 5- Entry System and Diagnostic Assessment

**The diagnostic assessment of this course makes it possible to identify the initial level of students in terms of pedagogical and didactic knowledge, as well as their ability to understand and analyze teaching situations.**

### Section I: Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the correct answer.

1. Romanticism primarily emphasizes:
  - a) Scientific objectivity
  - b) Imagination and emotion
  - c) Social determinism
  - d) Urban realism
2. Which historical context most strongly influenced Romanticism?
  - a) The Industrial Revolution
  - b) The French Revolution
  - c) The Cold War
  - d) The Victorian Age
3. Realist writers typically aim to:

- a) Idealize human experience
  - b) Escape reality through fantasy
  - c) Represent everyday life accurately
  - d) Focus on the supernatural
4. Which of the following authors is most closely associated with Realism?
- a) Edgar Allan Poe
  - b) Nathaniel Hawthorne
  - c) Mark Twain
  - d) William Blake
5. Naturalism is best described as:
- a) An extension of Romantic idealism
  - b) A movement focused on myth and legend
  - c) A deterministic view of human life shaped by heredity and environment
  - d) A purely philosophical movement

**Section B: Write a short coherent paragraph about the following topic**

Epic poetry was the dominant genre in the Classical period. Explain its features and key characteristics providing examples of epic poems that you analysed last year.

## **6- Course Content:**

### **Course Introduction: General Introduction to Literary Movements**

- Definition and purpose of literary movements
- Literature and historical change
- Periodization and literary history
- Key critical concepts and analytical tools

### **Lesson 1: Theoretical Background on English Romanticism**

- Historical and intellectual background of Romanticism
- Core themes: imagination, nature, emotion, individualism, rebellion
- Romantic aesthetics and poetic language
- Major Romantic writers and representative texts

### **Lesson 2: Textual Analysis of Romantic Literary Works**

- Close reading of selected Romantic poems and prose
- Analysis of Romantic themes, symbolism, and style

### **Lesson 3: Theoretical Background on English Realism**

- Origins and rise of Realism in the nineteenth century
- Social change, industrialization, and the realist vision
- Characteristics of realist narrative: objectivity, detail, everyday life
- Major Realist writers and representative works

#### **Lesson 4: Textual Analysis of Realist Literary Works**

- Analysis of selected realist novels or short stories
- Focus on character, setting, social class, and narrative technique

#### **Lesson 5: Theoretical Background on English Naturalism**

- Naturalism as an extension of Realism
- Influence of science, determinism, and social environment
- Key themes: heredity, environment, social forces, survival
- Distinction between Realism and Naturalism

#### **Lesson 6: Textual Analysis of Naturalist Literary Works**

- Critical analysis of selected naturalist texts
- Examination of determinism, social critique, and narrative tone

### **7- Teaching and Learning Methods**

#### **Methods :**

- Lectures and guided discussions
- Textual and thematic analysis
- Student presentations
- Comparative readings
- Written assignments and exams

#### **Assessment :**

- Continuous assessment (assignments, oral presentations) 40 %
- Final written examination 60 %

## Course Introduction:

### What Are Literary Movements?

This course offers an introduction to the major literary movements that shaped English literature from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, with particular focus on Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism. Literary movements do not emerge in isolation; they reflect the intellectual, social, political, and philosophical transformations of their time. By studying these movements, students gain insight into how literature responds to historical change and contributes to cultural debates.

#### 1.1 Definition

A **literary movement** is a period or trend in literary history in which writers share:

- Similar **aesthetic principles**
- Common **themes and concerns**
- A shared **philosophical or ideological outlook**
- Comparable **stylistic features**

Literary movements do not arise in isolation; they are shaped by:

- **Historical events** (revolutions, industrialization, wars)
- **Social change** (class structure, urbanization, scientific progress)
- **Philosophical thought** (idealism, positivism, determinism)
- **Cultural reactions** to previous movements

#### 1.2 Why Study Literary Movements?

Studying literary movements enables students to:

- **Understand** literature in its **historical and cultural context**
- **Identify patterns and conventions** in literary texts
- **Analyze** how literature **responds to or challenges reality**
- **Develop comparative and critical reading skills**

# Lesson One: Romanticism in English Literature

## Course Objective:

This course aims to provide an introduction to English Romanticism and identify its key features

## Specific Objectives:

- **Identify** the **historical, political, and intellectual contexts** of English Romanticism (1789–1832).
- **Define** Romanticism and distinguish it from Neoclassicism.
- **Recognize** the major **Romantic poets and prose writers** (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Mary Shelley).
- **Describe** key **Romantic themes** such as nature, imagination, individualism, emotion, childhood, revolution, and the sublime.
- **Explain** the concept of the Romantic **imagination** and its philosophical foundations.

## 1. Historical Background

English Romanticism emerged in the late eighteenth century, roughly between 1789 and 1830, as a powerful reaction against the Enlightenment emphasis on reason, order, and rationality. The movement was deeply shaped by two major historical events: the French Revolution (1789) and the Industrial Revolution.

The French Revolution initially inspired many British writers with its promises of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Early Romantic poets believed in the possibility of human freedom and social regeneration. However, the Reign of Terror and the rise of Napoleon led to disillusionment, producing a more complex and sometimes darker Romantic vision.

At the same time, the Industrial Revolution transformed England from a rural, agricultural society into an urban, industrial nation. Factories replaced farms, cities expanded rapidly, and traditional ways of life were disrupted. Romantic writers reacted strongly against industrialization, materialism, and the mechanization of human life. They turned instead toward nature, imagination, emotion, and the individual spirit as sources of truth and authenticity.

## 2. Definition of English Romanticism

English Romanticism is a literary, artistic, and intellectual movement that emphasizes emotion, imagination, individual experience, and the sublime power of nature. It rejects the strict rules, formalism, and rationalism of Neoclassicism and Enlightenment thought.

Rather than viewing reason as the supreme faculty, Romanticism elevates feeling and imagination as the highest forms of knowledge. Truth, for the Romantics, is not discovered through logic alone but through intuition and personal experience. Poetry becomes an expression of the inner self, and the poet is seen as a visionary figure capable of revealing deeper spiritual realities.

### **3. Major Aspects and Characteristics**

One of the central characteristics of Romanticism is the celebration of nature. Nature is not merely a background setting but a living, spiritual force. It is often portrayed as a source of healing, moral guidance, and transcendence. In contrast to industrial society, nature represents purity and harmony.

Another important feature is subjectivity and individualism. Romantic writers focus on personal emotion, memory, and introspection. The individual's inner life becomes more important than external social rules. This shift marks the rise of lyrical poetry centered on personal experience.

Romanticism also values the imagination as a creative and transformative power. Imagination is seen not simply as fantasy but as a faculty that shapes reality and connects the human mind to the infinite.

The movement is further characterized by an interest in the supernatural, the mysterious, and the sublime. The sublime refers to experiences that inspire awe, terror, or wonder—often in the presence of vast natural landscapes.

Finally, Romantic literature often expresses a spirit of rebellion against authority, tradition, and social injustice. Romantic heroes are frequently outsiders, rebels, or misunderstood figures who challenge social norms.

### **4. Major Themes**

Several recurring themes dominate English Romantic literature.

The theme of nature is central. Nature functions as teacher, refuge, and spiritual guide. It reflects the emotional states of the poet and serves as a contrast to corrupted civilization.

The theme of childhood and innocence is also significant. Childhood is often idealized as a period of purity and imaginative freedom.

Another key theme is freedom and revolution. Influenced by political upheavals, Romantic writers often explore the desire for political, social, and personal liberation.

The theme of the individual versus society appears frequently. Romantic protagonists struggle against oppressive institutions, social conventions, or internal conflicts.

Additionally, Romantic literature explores love, beauty, mortality, and the passage of time, often with a tone of melancholy or longing.

## 5. Major Writers and Their Works

The first generation of English Romantic poets includes William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Their joint publication, *Lyrical Ballads*, is considered the starting point of English Romanticism. Wordsworth's poetry, such as "Tintern Abbey" and *The Prelude*, emphasizes memory, nature, and the growth of the poet's mind. Coleridge, in poems like "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," explores the supernatural and the psychological.

The second generation includes Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. Byron created the figure of the rebellious "Byronic hero" in works like *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Shelley's poetry, including "Ode to the West Wind," expresses revolutionary idealism and faith in change. Keats, in odes such as "Ode to a Nightingale" and "To Autumn," explores beauty, art, and mortality with intense sensory richness.

In prose fiction, Mary Shelley contributed significantly with *Frankenstein*, a novel that combines Romantic imagination with Gothic elements and philosophical reflection on science and human ambition.

Another important figure is William Blake, whose collections *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* explore innocence, corruption, and spiritual vision through symbolic poetry.

## 6. Conclusion

English Romanticism represents a profound transformation in literary history. Emerging from political revolution and industrial change, it challenged Enlightenment rationalism and celebrated emotion, imagination, and nature. It placed the individual at the center of artistic creation and redefined the role of the poet as a visionary and prophet. Through its themes of freedom, beauty, rebellion, and spiritual exploration, Romanticism continues to shape modern conceptions of literature and the self.

**Assignment 01:** Prepare oral presentations in which you provide literary analyses of the following literary works from a Romantic perspective.

- Blake, William. "The Lamb." *Songs of Innocence*
- Blake, William. "The Tyger." *Songs of Experience*
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord. "She Walks in Beauty."
- Keats, John. "To Autumn."
- Clare, John. "The Daisy."
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*.

## Lesson Two: Analysis of Romantic Poems

### Course Objective:

This course aims to enable students to analyse Romantic Poetry and identify the characteristics of their style, language, choice of words and themes.

### Specific Objectives:

- Recognize the major Romantic poets and prose writers (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Mary Shelley).
- Identify key Romantic themes such as nature, imagination, individualism, emotion, childhood, revolution, and the sublime.
- Write literary analyses of Romantic poems.

### First Poem: The Lamb and The Tiger by William Blake

#### The Lamb

By William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee  
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.  
By the stream & o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing woolly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice!  
Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!

#### The Tyger

By William Blake

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat.  
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
In the forests of the night:  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Source: *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, edited by David E. Erdman (Anchor Books, 1988)

## Literary Analysis:

### 1. “The Lamb” (from *Songs of Innocence*)

“The Lamb” presents a child’s gentle questioning of creation, addressed to a lamb, a symbol of purity, innocence, and divine benevolence.

#### Themes

##### a. Innocence and Divine Creation

The poem captures the innocence of childhood and the purity of divine creation. The lamb is both a literal creature and a symbol of innocence. The child’s voice reflects uncorrupted faith, wonder, and trust in divine goodness.

##### b. Nature and the Divine

Blake portrays nature as an emanation of God’s creative energy. The lamb, meek and mild, reflects divine gentleness. This aligns with Romanticism’s belief in **nature as a reflection of the divine imagination** rather than a mechanical system.

##### c. Childhood and Innocence

The child-speaker symbolizes an unfallen state, curiosity and purity untouched. For Blake (and the Romantics), children embody a form of spiritual truth lost in adulthood.

## Romantic Features in “The Lamb”

Romantic Feature	Expression in the Poem
Nature and the Divine	The lamb reveals God’s presence in the natural world.
Childhood as a state of truth	The child’s innocence represents intuitive spiritual wisdom.
Emotion and imagination	The poem celebrates feeling and wonder over rational explanation.
Simplicity and spirituality	The pastoral imagery conveys moral and spiritual simplicity.

## Second Poem: To Autumn by John Keats

### To Autumn

By John Keats

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;  
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
 Until they think warm days will never cease,  
 For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:  
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
 Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,  
 Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?  
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft

To Autumn, John Keats, Poetry Foundation

## Literary Analysis:

- **Title:** *To Autumn*
- **Poet:** John Keats
- **Date of Composition:** September 1819
- **Publication:** 1820, in *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems*
- **Form:** Ode (three eleven-line stanzas, iambic pentameter)
- **Tone:** Calm, reflective, celebratory

Keats wrote “*To Autumn*” during his most productive poetic period (1818–1819), the same year he composed “*Ode to a Nightingale*” and “*Ode on a Grecian Urn*.” This poem is often considered his most **mature and perfect** work, a serene meditation on nature’s beauty and the inevitable cycle of growth, fulfillment, and decay.

### 1. Summary

The poem unfolds in **three stanzas**, each representing a phase of the autumn season and, symbolically, a phase of life:

1. **Stanza 1:** Early autumn: nature’s abundance and ripening fruits.
2. **Stanza 2:** Mid-autumn: the personified figure of Autumn as a harvester resting amidst her labour.
3. **Stanza 3:** Late autumn: the fading of the season, the sounds of departure, and acceptance of the coming end.

Through this structure, Keats leads the reader from **fullness and fertility to quiet decline**, yet without sorrow, emphasizing **harmony and acceptance**.

### 2. Themes

#### a. The Transience of Beauty and Life

A central Romantic concern, the theme of **transience** is embodied in the ripeness of autumn, a moment of perfection that inevitably passes.

“And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.”

This closing image of migrating swallows gently suggests the approach of winter and death. Yet, Keats does not lament; instead, he finds beauty in the fleeting nature of existence.

This calm acceptance marks a contrast with his earlier odes, where he wrestled with mortality and loss (“*Ode to a Nightingale*”). In “*To Autumn*,” Keats reaches a state of **philosophical serenity**, celebrating impermanence as part of life’s natural order.

#### b. Nature’s Fertility and Fulfillment

Keats opens the poem with a vision of **abundance and ripeness**:

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun.”

Autumn is personified as a **benevolent force** working in harmony with the sun to ripen fruits and fill the world with nourishment.

The imagery of swelling gourds, plumping hazel shells, and blooming flowers evokes a sensuous fullness, the Romantic delight in **the sensual beauty of the natural world**.

### c. The Cycle of Life and Death

Keats portrays autumn as a **culmination** of life’s cycle, a time of harvest, rest, and preparation for death. The poem moves naturally from abundance (stanza 1), through stillness (stanza 2), to quiet decline (stanza 3).

This progression mirrors **human existence**, youth, maturity, and old age, and reflects the Romantic awareness that **beauty and death are inseparable**.

### d. Harmony between Humanity and Nature

Autumn is personified as a **female figure** engaged in human-like activities: sitting carelessly on a granary floor, watching cider pressings, or gleaning in the fields.

This **fusion of human and natural imagery** reflects the Romantic belief in a **deep spiritual unity** between humans and the natural world. Nature is not a backdrop but a living, conscious presence that shares in human emotion and rhythm.

### e. The Celebration of the Senses

Keats’s imagery engages **all five senses**, sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound, creating an immersive sensory experience.

- **Sight:** “Mists and mellow fruitfulness,” “barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day.”
- **Sound:** “Wailful choir the small gnats mourn.”
- **Touch and smell:** “Soft-lifted by the winnowing wind,” “fume of poppies.”

This sensuous richness is a hallmark of Keats’s style and Romantic aesthetics, **to know beauty through the body as well as the soul**.

## 3. Romantic Features in “To Autumn”

Romantic Feature	Expression in the Poem
1. Reverence for Nature	The entire poem is a hymn to autumn’s beauty, depicting nature as alive, harmonious, and creative.
2. Sensory Imagination	Vivid imagery appeals to sight, sound, smell, and touch — reflecting Romantic sensuousness.
3. Emotion and	The poem is deeply emotional, expressing awe and tranquility

Romantic Feature	Expression in the Poem
Subjectivity	through observation.
4. The Sublime in the Ordinary	Keats finds grandeur not in storms or mountains but in simple, everyday scenes — fruit, fields, insects, birds.
5. Unity of Man and Nature	Autumn is personified as a human-like being, blurring the line between the natural and the human.
6. Celebration of the Moment	The poem captures a single, perfect moment of ripeness — a Romantic fixation on “the now.”
7. Meditation on Mortality	The awareness of time’s passing and the beauty of decay reflect Romantic acceptance of death as natural.

### Third Poem: To the Daisy by William Wordsworth

## To the Daisy

In youth from rock to rock I went,  
 From hill to hill, in discontent  
 Of pleasure high and turbulent,  
 Most pleas'd when most uneasy;  
 But now my own delights I make,  
 My thirst at every rill can slake,  
 And gladly Nature's love partake  
 Of thee, sweet Daisy!

2

When soothed a while by milder airs,  
 Thee Winter in the garland wears  
 That thinly shades his few grey hairs;  
 Spring cannot shun thee;  
 Whole summer fields are thine by right;  
 And Autumn, melancholy Wight!  
 Doth in thy crimson head delight  
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,  
 Thou greet'st the Traveller in the lane;  
 If welcome once thou count'st it gain;  
 Thou art not daunted,  
 Nor car'st if thou be set at naught;  
 And oft alone in nooks remote  
 We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,  
 When such are wanted.

Be Violets in their secret mews  
 The flowers the wanton Zephyrs chuse;  
 Proud be the Rose, with rains and dews  
   Her head impearling;  
 Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,  
 Yet hast not gone without thy fame;

From *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth

## Literary Analysis:

- **Title:** *To the Daisy*
- **Author:** William Wordsworth
- **Date of Composition:** Between 1802–1807
- **Type:** Lyric poem (several versions exist; Wordsworth wrote multiple poems to the daisy)
- **Form:** Short, meditative lyric written in simple quatrains
- **Tone:** Gentle, reflective, reverent

Wordsworth wrote several “daisy” poems (“*To the Daisy*,” “*The Small Celandine*,” “*To the Same Flower*”), in which he elevates humble flowers into subjects of philosophical contemplation.

The daisy, for Wordsworth, is not just a flower but a **symbol of moral purity, humility, constancy, and the quiet beauty of the natural world.**

## 1. Summary

In “*To the Daisy*,” Wordsworth addresses the small, common wildflower directly. He admires its simplicity and endurance, blooming in meadows, trodden by feet, yet always returning. The poet reflects on the flower’s **unassuming beauty**, its presence in every season, and the **moral lessons** it teaches through its humility and perseverance.

While the daisy might seem ordinary, Wordsworth transforms it into a symbol of **spiritual truth and poetic inspiration.**

By the end, the poem becomes a meditation on how nature’s smallest creations reflect divine order and teach humans how to live simply and sincerely.

## 2. Major Themes

### a. The Beauty of Simplicity

Wordsworth celebrates the **ordinary beauty** of the daisy, a flower that others might overlook. Unlike the rose or the lily, the daisy is not exotic or rare, but its charm lies in its simplicity and quiet endurance.

This reflects a central Romantic value: **the elevation of the commonplace** and the belief that **true beauty resides in simplicity and sincerity**, not in grandeur or artifice.

“In youth from rock to rock I went,  
From hill to hill, in discontent;  
Of pleasure high and turbulent,  
Most pleased when most uneasy.”

The poet contrasts his youthful restlessness with the calm contentment he learns from the humble daisy, a reminder that **peace comes through simplicity and harmony with nature**.

## **b. Nature as Teacher and Moral Guide**

For Wordsworth, **nature is the great moral educator**. The daisy teaches virtues such as:

- **Humility:** It grows close to the ground, unnoticed yet persistent.
- **Patience and endurance:** It blooms through changing seasons.
- **Cheerfulness:** Its bright face turns toward the sun, symbolizing optimism and faith.

Wordsworth often presents nature as a **living moral presence**, capable of shaping human character and emotion.

## **c. The Spiritual Value of the Natural World**

Wordsworth views the daisy as a **manifestation of divine beauty**, a small revelation of God’s creative spirit.

By contemplating this simple flower, the poet experiences a **spiritual awakening**, sensing the sacredness that infuses even the humblest parts of creation.

## **d. Childhood and Innocence**

The daisy also evokes the **purity and innocence of childhood**. Its modesty and freshness mirror the childlike qualities Wordsworth associates with the purest states of the human heart.

Romanticism revered childhood as a time of natural wisdom, unspoiled by the corruption of society. In this sense, the daisy represents a **childlike vision of the world**: simple, sincere, and filled with wonder.

## **e. Permanence and Transience**

The daisy returns each spring despite being trampled or ignored. This endurance symbolizes **constancy amidst change**, one of Wordsworth’s most cherished ideas.

Nature’s cycle of death and renewal reminds the poet of the **continuity of life and the resilience of the human spirit**. In Romantic thought, this cyclical view of nature provides comfort against human mortality.

### 3. Imagery, Style and Romantic Aspects

Feature	Description	Romantic Function
<b>Address to the flower</b>	The poem takes the form of a direct apostrophe (“To the Daisy”), giving the flower a voice or soul.	Expresses Romantic personification of nature — all living things share spirit and consciousness.
<b>Pastoral imagery</b>	Meadows, sunshine, gentle breezes.	Evokes the harmony and simplicity of rural life, idealized by the Romantics.
<b>Symbolism</b>	The daisy = humility, innocence, constancy, simplicity.	Shows how ordinary nature holds spiritual and moral meaning.
<b>Tone</b>	Reverent and contemplative.	Reflects the Romantic sense of awe before nature’s moral beauty.
<b>Language</b>	Simple diction, musical rhythm, conversational flow.	Enacts Wordsworth’s poetic ideal of using “the language really used by men.”

### Fourth Work: Literary Analysis: Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

- **Title:** *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*
- **Author:** Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley
- **First Publication:** 1818 (revised 1831 edition)
- **Genre:** Gothic novel; early science fiction; Romantic tragedy
- **Narrative Form:** Epistolary frame narrative (letters from Walton to his sister → Victor’s narration → the Creature’s story → return to Walton)

Shelley’s novel emerged from the **Romantic movement**, a time when poets and thinkers were exploring the power of emotion, imagination, and nature against the backdrop of industrial and scientific progress. *Frankenstein* dramatizes the tension between **reason and passion, science and nature, creation and destruction**, and the human desire to transcend limits.

#### 1. Central Themes

##### a. The Danger of Unrestrained Knowledge and Ambition

Victor Frankenstein embodies the **Romantic over-reacher**, a modern Prometheus who seeks forbidden knowledge and power over nature. His ambition to “pour a torrent of light into our dark world” mirrors the Enlightenment’s faith in reason and science, but Shelley presents this as dangerous hubris.

“Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge.”

##### **Romanticcritique:**

Romanticism distrusted the Enlightenment ideal of rational mastery. Shelley shows that **intellectual ambition without emotional wisdom** leads to alienation and destruction.

Victor's isolation from nature, family, and emotion symbolizes the Romantic warning against the dehumanizing effects of unchecked reason.

## **b. Nature as Restorative and Sublime**

Throughout the novel, **nature** provides emotional healing and moral insight, a quintessential Romantic belief.

When Victor collapses from guilt and despair, **the natural world revives him**:

“The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind.”

Mountains, lakes, and storms are more than scenery; they embody the **sublime**, that mixture of awe, terror, and beauty that Romantics associated with humanity's encounter with the infinite.

- The **Alpine landscapes** and **Arctic wastes** mirror Victor's inner turmoil.
- Nature functions as **moral balance**, while human artifice (science, cities, and laboratories) becomes destructive.

Thus, the novel contrasts **natural creation** with **unnatural creation (life through laboratory science)**.

## **c. Isolation and Alienation**

Isolation is one of the novel's dominant emotional currents, a Romantic theme linked to the limits of individuality and the need for empathy.

- **Victor's isolation** results from his obsession with creation and later his guilt.
- **The Creature's isolation** is both physical and emotional, rejected by his creator and society, he becomes the embodiment of the outcast Romantic hero.
- **Walton**, the Arctic explorer, mirrors both men, a lonely seeker of glory and knowledge.

All three characters share the same Romantic trait: the pursuit of the **ideal** leads them to loneliness and despair. Shelley reveals that the **Romantic imagination, if detached from community and moral feeling, becomes destructive**.

## **d. Creation, Responsibility, and Ethics**

Victor's failure to care for his creation lies at the heart of the tragedy. Shelley explores the **moral responsibility** that accompanies creative or intellectual power, whether artistic, scientific, or divine.

## **e. The Search for Identity and the Human Condition**

The Creature's narrative is deeply Romantic in its introspection and emotional intensity. His desire for love, understanding, and belonging reflects the **Romantic ideal of self-discovery and the quest for meaning**.

His experiences with nature, books, and human society awaken his consciousness, mirroring the Romantic belief in **education through feeling and experience**, not reason alone. Yet, the more he learns, the more he suffers, illustrating the **Romantic paradox** that greater awareness brings deeper pain.

### f. The Sublime and the Gothic

Shelley fuses **Gothic terror** with **Romantic sublimity**, emotions of awe, fear, and transcendence that blur the line between horror and beauty.

- The **Arctic setting**: vast, desolate, sublime, reflects the isolation of the human soul.
- **Lightning and storms**: symbolize both creative inspiration and destructive power.
- **The Creature’s appearance**: horrifying, yet filled with pathos; his suffering evokes both fear and compassion.

The sublime thus becomes the emotional landscape of the novel, nature and creation are both terrifying and magnificent.

### g. The Romantic Ideal of Emotion and Imagination

Romanticism valued **emotion as the source of truth and creativity**. Shelley’s narrative constantly contrasts **feeling vs. reason**:

- Victor’s tragedy lies in ignoring his emotional and ethical instincts.
- The Creature, in contrast, feels deeply, he loves, reads poetry, and responds to beauty in nature. Ironically, the “monster” embodies **human sensitivity**.

This reversal reflects the Romantic belief that **imagination and empathy**, not intellect, define true humanity.

## 3. Romantic Features Revealed in *Frankenstein*

Romantic Feature	Expression in the Novel
<b>Emotion over Reason</b>	The Creature’s feelings of loneliness and longing contrast Victor’s cold scientific rationality.
<b>Reverence for Nature</b>	Nature restores, teaches, and reflects the inner life of characters (e.g. Mont Blanc, Lake Geneva, Arctic).
<b>The Sublime</b>	Awe and terror in nature mirror human emotion and the limits of human power.
<b>Imagination and Creativity</b>	Victor’s act of creation represents the Romantic creative spirit — the artist or poet as “godlike” — but also its moral danger.
<b>Individualism and Isolation</b>	The focus on solitary figures (Victor, Walton, the Creature) reveals the Romantic fascination with the lone seeker.
<b>Rebellion and Transgression</b>	Victor’s defiance of natural and divine law echoes the Promethean and Byronic hero archetypes.
<b>Moral and Emotional</b>	The Creature’s development through observation and feeling aligns

Romantic Feature	Expression in the Novel
Education	with Romantic notions of self-formation through experience.
Critique of Industrial Modernity	The novel warns against scientific and technological domination over nature — a Romantic protest against mechanization.

### Fifth Poem: “She Walks in Beauty” by Lord Byron

#### She Walks in Beauty

By Lord Byron (George Gordon)

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus mellowed to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impaired the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,

A mind at peace with all below,

A heart whose love is innocent!

George Gordon, Lord Byron. "She Walks in Beauty" from *Hebrew Melodies*. London: John Murray, 1832-33. Public Domain.

## Literary Analysis

### 1. Introduction

"She Walks in Beauty" (1814) is one of Lord Byron's most celebrated lyrical poems, often admired for its musicality, emotional depth, and idealized portrayal of feminine beauty. The poem was inspired by Byron's encounter with his cousin by marriage, Mrs. Anne Beatrix Wilmot, at a social gathering where she wore a striking black dress adorned with sparkling sequins. Rather than expressing romantic desire, the poem presents a contemplative admiration of both the woman's outward beauty and her inner virtue.

### 2. Summary of the Poem

The poem's three stanzas of six lines each (written in iambic tetrameter) offer a gradual movement from external to internal beauty:

The first stanza describes the woman's physical grace as a harmonious balance between light and dark.

The second stanza continues the admiration of her features, her eyes and face, as reflections of her calm and pure inner world.

The third stanza concludes by revealing that her beauty mirrors her moral innocence and peaceful mind.

### 3. Themes

#### a. The Idealization of Beauty

The central theme is beauty, but Byron's treatment goes beyond physical appearance. Beauty, for him, is the visible manifestation of inner virtue and serenity. The woman's beauty is portrayed as a perfect fusion of "dark and bright", suggesting that true beauty lies in harmony and balance rather than excess.

## **b. Inner Goodness and Moral Purity**

Byron links physical beauty with spiritual purity. The description of her face as expressing “peace” and “innocence” implies that external beauty mirrors inner virtue. This theme reflects the Romantic belief in the unity of body and soul, as well as the moral and emotional depth of human nature.

## **c. The Union of Opposites**

The imagery of light and dark, day and night, or mind and body, conveys the idea that beauty and truth are achieved through the reconciliation of contrasts. Byron’s poetic vision embraces duality; grace emerges not from perfection or excess but from moderation and equilibrium.

## **d. The Power of Emotion and Intuitive Perception**

The speaker’s admiration is not analytical but intuitive and emotional. He perceives beauty as something that transcends rational understanding. This focus on emotional response and subjective experience aligns closely with the Romantic ideal of feeling as a source of truth.

# **4. Romantic Aspects in the Poem**

## **a. Celebration of Emotion and Individual Perception**

Romanticism emphasizes the intensity of personal feeling and the authenticity of individual experience. In this poem, the speaker’s emotional response to beauty is spontaneous and profound, showing how emotion can elevate perception to a kind of revelation.

## **b. Nature and Natural Imagery**

Although the poem centres on human beauty, Byron employs natural imagery, “cloudless climes,” “starry skies,” “tender light”, to describe it. The woman is idealized as part of the natural world, suggesting that human beauty is a reflection of the natural order’s harmony. This merging of nature and human emotion is a hallmark of Romantic aesthetics.

## **c. The Idealization of Innocence and Purity**

Romantic poets often valued innocence, virtue, and moral integrity as higher forms of beauty. Byron’s admiration is pure and contemplative; he venerates rather than desires the woman, portraying her as a symbol of moral and emotional perfection.

#### **d. The Sublime and the Spiritual**

The poem evokes a sense of awe and spiritual elevation, key features of the Romantic sublime. The speaker experiences beauty as something transcendent, an experience that lifts him beyond the material world.

#### **e. The Subjective Vision**

Romanticism is deeply subjective; truth and meaning are found in the mind and heart of the perceiver. Byron's poem does not describe the woman objectively but presents her through the lens of his emotional response, showing how beauty is constructed through perception and feeling.

### **5. Language and Style**

Byron's language is marked by harmony and balance, echoing the poem's central theme of unity (e.g., "One shade the more, one ray the less"). Byron uses imagery of light and darkness to express moral and physical harmony. He fuses Simplicity and restraint, which make the admiration seem sincere and pure rather than passionate or sensual.

### **6. Conclusion**

"She Walks in Beauty" exemplifies Romantic ideals of beauty, emotion, and spiritual harmony. Byron fuses outer form and inner grace, using natural imagery and emotional perception to reveal the depth of human experience. The poem stands as a quintessential Romantic meditation on the union of the physical and the spiritual, the way beauty can become a mirror of moral virtue and universal harmony.

# Lesson Three: Theoretical Introduction to Realism in English Literature

## 1. Historical Background

**Realism** emerged as a dominant literary movement in the **mid-19th century**, largely as a **reaction against Romanticism**. While Romantic writers (such as Wordsworth and Keats) emphasized emotion, imagination, and individual experience, **Realists** sought to represent **life as it truly is**, focusing on **ordinary people**, **social realities**, and **everyday experiences** without idealization or exaggeration.

The roots of Realism can be traced to **European intellectual developments**:

- The **Industrial Revolution** (late 18th–19th centuries) brought massive social, economic, and class changes, creating new urban realities and working-class struggles.
- The rise of **positivist philosophy** (Auguste Comte) and **empirical science** encouraged observation, fact, and reason over imagination.
- The **growth of literacy** and a **widening reading public** demanded literature that reflected their lives and contemporary issues.

In **England**, Realism flourished between **1830 and 1900**, particularly during the **Victorian era**. It coincided with the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901), a period marked by industrial progress, moral concern, and social reform. English Realism thus became a powerful medium for **social commentary** and **moral critique**.

## 2. Features and Objectives of Realism

Realism aimed to **represent life truthfully**, not as it should be, but as it is. Its objectives and stylistic features include:

### a. Verisimilitude and Fidelity to Reality

Realist writers strove for **accuracy and authenticity** in depicting characters, settings, and social conditions. The goal was to make fiction resemble real life as closely as possible.

### b. Ordinary Characters and Middle-Class Life

Instead of kings, heroes, or mythical figures, Realism focused on **ordinary individuals**, often middle- or lower-class people facing moral and social challenges.

### c. Social Criticism and Reform

Realist literature often served as a form of **social inquiry**, exposing injustices, poverty, gender inequality, and hypocrisy. It aimed to raise awareness and inspire **moral and social improvement**.

#### **d. Detailed Description and Objective Narration**

Writers employed **precise, detailed observation** of settings and behaviour. Narratives were often told in a **third-person omniscient voice**, giving an impression of objectivity and authority.

#### **e. Psychological Depth**

Realists paid close attention to **motives, moral conflicts, and inner consciousness**, anticipating later psychological realism.

#### **f. Ethical Concern and Moral Reflection**

Realist texts often contained a **moral dimension**, examining how individuals navigate complex moral and social circumstances.

#### **g. Rejection of Romantic Idealism**

In contrast to the Romantic emphasis on imagination and nature, Realism grounded itself in **urban settings, social institutions, and the realities of human struggle**.

### **3. Major Themes in Realist Literature**

Realist works explore **the human condition within its social and historical context**. Key recurring themes include:

1. **Class and Social Mobility:** Exploration of rigid class structures, ambition, and the struggle for respectability.
2. **Industrialization and Urban Life:** The effects of industrial progress on individuals, families, and communities.
3. **Morality and Hypocrisy:** The tension between public virtue and private vice.
4. **Marriage and Gender Roles:** Particularly the limited roles available to women and their dependence on marriage for security.
5. **Poverty and Inequality:** Sympathetic portrayals of the poor and critiques of social injustice.
6. **Conflict between Individual and Society:** How societal norms constrain personal happiness and freedom.
7. **Education and Self-Improvement:** The role of education as a means of moral and social advancement.
8. **Truth and Perception:** How people's understanding of the world is shaped by experience and class.

## 4. Key English Realist Writers and Canonical Texts

### 1. Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

- **Major Works:** *Oliver Twist* (1837–39), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), *Great Expectations* (1861)
- **Contribution:** Dickens combined social realism with moral compassion. His novels expose the cruelty of industrial society, child labour, and class injustice while affirming human sympathy and redemption.

### 2. George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819–1880)

- **Major Works:** *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Middlemarch* (1871–72)
- **Contribution:** Eliot introduced psychological realism and moral complexity to fiction. She portrayed provincial life, moral choice, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world.

### 3. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863)

- **Major Works:** *Vanity Fair* (1847–48), *Pendennis* (1848–50)
- **Contribution:** Thackeray used irony and satire to reveal the moral emptiness and hypocrisy of Victorian society, particularly among the middle and upper classes.

### 4. Anthony Trollope (1815–1882)

- **Major Works:** *The Warden* (1855), *Barchester Towers* (1857), *The Way We Live Now* (1875)
- **Contribution:** Trollope explored the professional and domestic lives of the English middle class, focusing on institutions like the Church and Parliament.

### 5. Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865)

- **Major Works:** *Mary Barton* (1848), *North and South* (1855), *Cranford* (1853)
- **Contribution:** Gaskell combined social realism with sympathy for working-class struggles, particularly women's experiences amid industrial hardship.

### 6. George Gissing (1857–1903)

- **Major Works:** *New Grub Street* (1891), *The Odd Women* (1893)
- **Contribution:** Gissing depicted the disillusionment of intellectuals and the limited opportunities for women in late Victorian society.

### 7. Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)

- **Major Works:** *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886)
- **Contribution:** Though often considered a bridge to Naturalism, Hardy's rural novels combine social realism with tragic determinism, showing how fate and social constraints destroy individual happiness.

## 5. Conclusion

Realism represented a **turn toward truth and social engagement** in literature. By portraying the lives of ordinary people with honesty and empathy, Realist writers gave voice to social concerns, moral questions, and the complexities of modern life. It marked a crucial stage in the evolution of the English novel, shaping later literary movements such as **Naturalism**, **Modernism**, and **Social Realism** in the 20th century.

**Assignment 02:** Prepare oral presentations in which you provide literary analyses of the following literary works from a Realist perspective.

- Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*.
- Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*.
- Eliot, George. *Middlemarch*.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *North and South*.

## Lesson Four: Literary Analyses of Selected Realist Novels

### First Novel: Literary Analysis of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*

#### Introduction

George Eliot's *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (1871–1872) is often considered the pinnacle of English literary realism. Set in the fictional Midlands town of Middlemarch in the 1830s, it offers a panoramic portrayal of English provincial society before the Reform Act of 1832. Eliot (the pen name of Mary Ann Evans) uses the town as a microcosm of the wider social world, examining the moral, political, and psychological complexities of her characters. Her realism lies in the depth of psychological insight, the moral ambiguity of human behaviour, and the intricate web of social relations that shape individual destinies.

#### I. Themes

##### 1. The Quest for Idealism and its Disillusionments

At the heart of *Middlemarch* lies the tension between idealism and reality.

- **Dorothea Brooke**, inspired by spiritual and moral ideals, seeks a life of purpose through intellectual and moral improvement. Her marriage to **Casaubon**, whom she believes to be a great scholar, soon becomes a symbol of disillusionment. Eliot shows how lofty ideals, when detached from practical understanding of human nature, can lead to suffering.
- Similarly, **Tertius Lydgate**, the young doctor with scientific ambitions, dreams of reforming medical practice. However, his career is thwarted by social conventions, financial pressures, and his marriage to the vain and materialistic **Rosamond Vincy**. Eliot thus explores how idealistic aspirations are constrained by society's material realities and personal limitations.

##### 2. Marriage and the Social Institution

Marriage is one of the novel's central themes, depicted as a moral, intellectual, and social partnership rather than a romantic union. Eliot portrays several contrasting marriages to reveal the complexity of human motives and expectations:

- **Dorothea and Casaubon**: an intellectual mismatch leading to emotional sterility.
- **Lydgate and Rosamond**: a marriage of passion and illusion that turns into economic and moral compromise.
- **Mary Garth and Fred Vincy**: a realistic and moral relationship based on mutual understanding and growth.

Through these relationships, Eliot critiques the Victorian idealization of marriage, suggesting that true union must rest on moral and intellectual sympathy, not illusion or desire.

### 3. The Web of Society and Interconnected Lives

Eliot's realism is built on the metaphor of the “**web**”, the intricate interdependence of individual and social life. The lives of Middlemarch's inhabitants, though apparently separate, constantly intersect and influence one another. This network of relationships illustrates how personal choices have moral and social repercussions. The novel thus anticipates the sociological understanding of society as a system of mutual obligations and moral sympathies.

### 4. The Role of Women and Gender Constraints

Through Dorothea and other female characters, Eliot examines the **limited roles available to women** in Victorian society. Women's intellectual and moral energies are often stifled by patriarchal structures. Dorothea's aspirations for meaningful work and self-development are curtailed by her marriage and social expectations. Yet Eliot does not advocate rebellion but rather moral growth within constraint, she envisions a world in which women's moral intelligence can shape society if given the opportunity.

### 5. Change, Reform, and Historical Transition

Set in the 1830s but written in the 1870s, *Middlemarch* reflects Eliot's historical realism: the novel examines the **impact of social, political, and scientific change** (such as the Reform Bill, new medical theories, and the rise of the railway). The community's resistance to reform mirrors the slow pace of moral and intellectual progress. Eliot's characters live within history, caught between the old provincial traditions and the dawning forces of modernity.

## II. Aspects of Realism

### 1. Psychological Realism

Eliot's realism is not confined to external social description but extends to **the inner consciousness of characters**. She renders thought processes, motives, and moral dilemmas with scientific precision. Her **omniscient narrator** often intervenes to interpret human behaviour, blending sympathy with critical analysis. For instance, Dorothea's self-deception or Lydgate's moral weakness are dissected with moral insight rather than judgment.

### 2. Social Realism

Eliot's detailed depiction of **provincial life**, its gossip, class distinctions, political debates, and professional rivalries, creates an authentic social world. The novel's range of characters (from clergymen and reformers to bankers and tradesmen) offers a cross-section of English society. The emphasis on money, inheritance, and status underscores the material foundations of moral life, reflecting Eliot's awareness of the economic dimensions of human relationships.

### 3. Moral Realism

Eliot's realism is deeply **ethical**: she believed the novelist's task was to foster moral sympathy by portraying the web of human responsibility. Her characters are neither heroes nor villains but morally complex beings. Through their struggles, Eliot encourages readers to

cultivate understanding rather than moral condemnation, a realism rooted in compassion and moral intelligence.

#### 4. Narrative Technique and the Omniscient Narrator

The narrator in *Middlemarch* functions almost as a moral philosopher. Eliot's use of **free indirect discourse** allows access to multiple consciousness while maintaining a reflective narrative voice. This technique gives the reader both intimacy and distance, an essential feature of realist narration. Her moral commentary bridges individual experience and universal truth, turning the novel into both a psychological study and a philosophical reflection.

#### 5. Historical and Scientific Realism

Eliot integrates the **scientific spirit of her age** into her fiction. Influenced by positivism and moral philosophy, she treats human behaviour as subject to laws of cause and effect. Characters like Lydgate embody the new scientific rationality, while the narrator's method mirrors the observational discipline of the scientist. *Middlemarch* thus becomes a moral experiment in understanding the conditions of human happiness and failure.

#### Conclusion

*Middlemarch* stands as one of the most comprehensive embodiments of **Victorian realism**. Eliot unites the **inner world of psychology** with the **outer world of society**, creating a moral and intellectual panorama of human life. Her realism is not mere photographic representation but a **philosophical exploration of how individuals, bound by social circumstance and moral responsibility, seek meaning in a complex world**.

### Second Novel: Analysis of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855)

#### Introduction

Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* stands as a quintessential example of **Victorian realism**, combining social commentary, moral reflection, and psychological depth. Published in serial form in *Household Words* (edited by Charles Dickens), the novel explores the clash between **industrial progress and traditional rural values**, as well as the complex interplay between **class, gender, and conscience**. Gaskell transforms a romance plot into a serious sociological study of industrial England, particularly the tensions between **masters and workers, North and South, and men and women**.

## II. The Realist Framework of *North and South*

### 1. Social Realism and Industrial Life

One of the hallmarks of Victorian realism is its **concern with the representation of contemporary social realities**, and Gaskell achieves this with great precision.

- The fictional industrial city of **Milton-Northern** (modeled on Manchester) embodies the **harsh conditions of industrial capitalism**, smoke, noise, poverty, and social unrest.
- Gaskell provides **detailed depictions** of the factory system, the **cotton mills**, and the **daily struggles** of the working class, grounding her narrative in real-life social observation.
- Through her realistic portrayal of the **masters-versus-men conflict**, she humanizes both factory owners and workers, avoiding caricature.

## 2. Psychological Realism

Gaskell's realism extends beyond social description to the **inner lives** of her characters.

- Margaret Hale's moral growth and emotional struggles, her pride, compassion, and self-awareness, are presented with **subtle psychological depth**.
- Similarly, **John Thornton**, the self-made mill owner, undergoes a process of moral education through personal experience and emotional vulnerability. This **interior realism**, the depiction of thought, doubt, and transformation, reflects Gaskell's skill in portraying **moral consciousness and self-discovery**.

## 3. Dialogue and Dialect

Gaskell's use of **authentic dialect** among working-class characters (like Nicholas Higgins and Bessy) adds to the novel's realist texture.

- Their speech reflects **regional identity and social position**, giving voice to classes often marginalized in literature.
- The inclusion of **workers' perspectives**, not just as background but as moral and political agents, marks Gaskell's realism as **socially inclusive** and ethically engaged.

## 4. Mediation between Opposites

Victorian realism often seeks **reconciliation between opposing social forces**, and *North and South* is structured around such polarities:

- **Industrial North vs. Agrarian South**
  - **Capital vs. Labour**
  - **Reason vs. Emotion**
  - **Male Authority vs. Female Morality**
- Rather than idealizing either side, Gaskell's realism lies in her **balanced moral vision**, both Thornton and Margaret must learn empathy and understanding through conflict and dialogue.

## III. Major Themes in *North and South*

### 1. Industrial Conflict and Class Relations

The central theme of *North and South* is the **struggle between industrial capitalists and the working class**.

- Through the **strike** at Thornton's mill, Gaskell portrays the **economic hardship** and **mutual misunderstanding** that fuel social unrest.
- Yet, instead of advocating revolution, she proposes **mutual respect, dialogue, and social responsibility** as solutions.
- This theme situates Gaskell among the **social realists** who sought to depict industrial tensions not with polemical fervour but with **human sympathy and moral insight**.

## 2. The Condition of Women and Gender Roles

Margaret Hale's journey challenges the rigid **gender norms** of Victorian society.

- Unlike many heroines of her time, Margaret is **intellectually assertive, morally independent, and socially conscious**.
- Her relationship with Thornton is not merely romantic; it reflects a **negotiation of equality**, a balance between emotional and ethical strength.
- Gaskell's depiction of female agency, domestic influence, and moral authority aligns with **Victorian realism's focus on everyday heroism** within domestic and social spheres.

## 3. Moral Growth and Reconciliation

Both main characters undergo **moral transformation**, a key realist theme.

- Margaret learns humility and sympathy for industrial life, while Thornton learns compassion and the value of understanding his workers as human beings rather than economic tools.
- Their eventual union symbolizes **social harmony and moral progress**, achieved through dialogue rather than conflict.

## 4. Religion, Morality, and Conscience

While not didactic, the novel is imbued with **Christian ethics and moral introspection**.

- The contrast between **Mr. Hale's dissenting faith** and **Milton's materialism** underlines the moral and spiritual questions of the age.
- Gaskell's realism includes not only social observation but also **ethical inquiry**, how individuals act responsibly within changing social conditions.

## 5. Urbanization and Change

The novel reflects the **Victorian anxiety about industrialization** and the loss of pastoral simplicity.

- Margaret's initial disgust at Milton's smoke and noise mirrors the **southern idealization of rural life**, but her gradual appreciation of the North reflects **Gaskell's realist commitment to portraying modernity with balance**, not nostalgia.

#### IV. Aspects of Victorian Realism in *North and South*

Aspect	Manifestation in the Novel
Detailed Setting	Industrial Milton depicted through vivid sensory imagery, smoke, machinery, crowded streets.
Social Consciousness	Concern with poverty, labour strikes, and class relations.
Character Depth	Complex moral and emotional psychology of Margaret and Thornton.
Moral Vision	Ethical responsibility and reconciliation through understanding.
Everyday Life Focus	Attention to domestic life, family relations, illness, and death.
Objective Narration	A balanced tone that avoids melodrama; sympathy without sentimentality.

#### Conclusion

In *North and South*, Elizabeth Gaskell achieves a synthesis of **social realism, moral inquiry, and romantic narrative**. Her portrayal of the industrial world is neither condemnatory nor idealized, it is **observant, humane, and reformist**. By focusing on **human relationships within social structures**, Gaskell transforms the industrial novel into a profound study of **moral growth, social responsibility, and empathy**.

Her realism lies not only in **accurate representation** but also in the **ethical imagination** with which she bridges the divisions of her age. *North and South* thus remains a cornerstone of **Victorian realist fiction**, combining the precision of social documentation with the depth of psychological and moral vision.

#### Third Novel: Literary Analysis of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) stands at the crossroads of Victorian **realism, Gothic fiction**, and the emerging **female Bildungsroman**. While the novel contains elements of romance and the supernatural, its lasting power comes from its commitment to psychological, social, and moral realism. Brontë grounds her narrative in the everyday struggles of a marginalized woman, an orphan without wealth, status, or physical beauty, seeking autonomy, dignity, and love within a rigid class system.

#### I. Themes:

##### 1. The Quest for Independence and Self-Respect

A central theme is Jane's uncompromising search for personal autonomy. From Gateshead to Thornfield to Moor House, Jane consistently insists on being valued as an equal human being.

- **Independence as moral integrity:** When Jane leaves Rochester after the revelation of Bertha Mason, she demonstrates the novel's realism: love cannot override ethical principles or self-respect.
- **Economic independence:** Jane strives for financial autonomy by becoming a governess, a socially marginal but respectable position for women. Her inheritance later symbolizes her self-sufficiency.

This theme reflects the **real social struggles of Victorian women**, who were legally and economically dependent on male relatives.

## 2. Social Class, Inequality, and Mobility

Brontë portrays the rigid class structure of early 19th-century England with acute realism.

- Governesses like Jane existed in a liminal space, educated but socially inferior; part of the household but not fully accepted.
- Jane's interactions with Blanche Ingram, Mrs. Fairfax, and even Rochester highlight the subtle humiliations and constraints associated with class.
- The novel critiques the assumption that birth determines worth, championing merit, morality, and character over inherited privilege.

## 3. Gender Roles

Though written in the 1840s, *Jane Eyre* anticipates feminist ideas:

- Jane demands equality: "*I am a free human being with an independent will.*"
- She rejects St John's proposal because it denies her emotional and personal fulfillment, even though it would elevate her social status.
- Brontë critiques patriarchal figures: John Reed, Brocklehurst, Rochester (initially), and St John, each representing a form of male control.

This theme contributes to the novel's realism by exposing the lived experiences of women within the patriarchal family, church, and economy.

## 4. Religion: Hypocrisy vs. True Christian Morality

Three models of religion appear:

- **Mr. Brocklehurst's** oppressive, hypocritical evangelicalism.
- **Helen Burns's** passive, stoic spirituality based on self-sacrifice.
- **St John Rivers's** austere, duty-driven interpretation of Christianity.

Jane ultimately chooses a balanced, compassionate moral philosophy. The treatment of religion is realistic because it mirrors **real Victorian debates** about morality, salvation, and social responsibility.

## 5. Love, Passion, and Moral Choice

While often read as a romantic story, *Jane Eyre* is fundamentally about the moral dimensions of love.

- Jane's love for Rochester is tested by her values and self-respect.
- Rochester learns humility and empathy, becoming a morally worthy partner by the novel's end.
- Brontë presents love not as a fairy tale but as a **negotiation between passion and duty**, grounding the story in psychological realism.

## 6. Identity and the Search for Belonging

As an orphan, Jane's life is shaped by exclusion, from the Reed household, from social elite circles, and from romantic equality.

- Her journey is one of constructing a stable sense of self.
- Jane's relationships with Helen Burns, Miss Temple, and the Rivers siblings help her form emotional belonging.
- The novel ends in emotional and economic balance: marriage becomes a partnership, not an escape from loneliness.

## II. Aspects of Realism in *Jane Eyre*

Despite its Gothic episodes (the "supernatural" voice, the eerie Thornfield setting), *Jane Eyre* is fundamentally a **realist novel**. Brontë's realism appears in several dimensions:

### 1. Psychological Realism

Brontë pioneered a deep exploration of the inner life:

- The novel is one of the earliest English examples of **first-person psychological narration**.
- Jane's emotional development, moral dilemmas, and internal conflicts are rendered with extraordinary detail.
- Brontë portrays emotions like jealousy, humiliation, anger, desire, and moral guilt with authenticity.

This psychological interiority is a hallmark of Victorian realism.

### 2. Social Realism and Class Consciousness

The novel carefully depicts:

- Life in boarding schools like Lowood (malnutrition, epidemics, strict discipline).
- The status of governesses, a common but socially precarious profession.

- Regional differences in class (e.g., the aristocratic Ingrams vs. rural families vs. middle-class Rivers siblings).

Such depictions reflect real Victorian institutions and social anxieties.

### **3. Economic Realism**

Characters' lives are shaped by money and property:

- Jane's lack of inheritance defines her vulnerability.
- Rochester's wealth and the legality of marriage drive the narrative conflict.
- Jane's sudden inheritance is a realistic reflection of colonial wealth and overseas trade (the novel subtly engages with Britain's imperial economy).

These details highlight the material realities behind social relations.

### **4. Moral Realism**

The novel insists on believable moral consequences:

- Jane cannot marry Rochester while Bertha is alive.
- Rochester's deceit leads to personal suffering and physical injury.
- St John's self-denial leads to emotional emptiness.

Brontë avoids simplistic moralizing, presenting real ethical complexity.

### **5. Depiction of Everyday Life**

Scenes of domestic life and daily routines reinforce realism:

- School routines at Lowood
- Governess work at Thornfield
- Jane's rural teaching at Morton
- Social gatherings and tea-table conversations

These scenes contrast with Gothic moments, grounding the narrative in familiar Victorian life.

### **Conclusion**

*Jane Eyre* blends Gothic atmosphere with a sharp realist critique of Victorian society. Its realism appears in its portrayal of:

- Social structures and inequalities
- Economic and gender constraints
- Everyday life and domestic routines
- Internal, psychological complexity
- Moral dilemmas grounded in real-world consequences

At the heart of the novel is Jane, the first fully realized modern heroine, whose insistence on dignity, independence, and moral coherence embodies the realist spirit. Brontë shows that a woman's inner life is worthy of serious narrative attention, making *Jane Eyre* both a foundational text of feminist literature and a landmark in realist fiction.

## Fourth Novel: Literary Analysis of Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*

### Introduction

Published in 1854, *Hard Times* stands as one of Charles Dickens's most explicitly **didactic** and **socially critical** novels. Set in the fictional industrial city of **Coketown**, it explores the moral, emotional, and spiritual costs of an increasingly mechanized and utilitarian society. Dickens wrote the novel at the height of the **Industrial Revolution**, when industrial capitalism, class divisions, and utilitarian education dominated English life.

Through his vivid depiction of characters like **Thomas Gradgrind**, **Josiah Bounderby**, and **Sissy Jupe**, Dickens examines the tension between **fact and fancy**, **humanity and machinery**, and **individual morality and social systems**.

### 1- Central Themes in *Hard Times*

#### 1. The Conflict between Fact and Fancy

The most prominent theme in *Hard Times* is the **opposition between “fact” and “fancy.”**

- **Mr. Gradgrind**, the schoolmaster, embodies the philosophy of **Utilitarianism**, which values measurable, factual knowledge and rejects imagination and emotion. His mantra, “Now, what I want is Facts”, epitomizes the mechanistic and materialist mentality of the age.
- In contrast, **Sissy Jupe**, the circus girl, represents **fancy, emotion, and moral intuition**. Through her, Dickens suggests that **human compassion, imagination, and emotional intelligence** are essential to a fulfilled life.

This conflict functions as Dickens's critique of an educational system that suppresses creativity and empathy in favor of rational calculation, mirroring the broader **social mechanization** of Victorian industrial society.

#### 2. Industrialization and Its Dehumanizing Effects

Set in the grim industrial city of **Coketown**, Dickens portrays the dehumanizing consequences of industrial capitalism. The city itself is described in terms of **smoke, soot, and monotony**, symbolizing the mechanized uniformity of industrial life:

“It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it.”

Workers, called the “**Hands**”, are stripped of individuality and reduced to mere instruments of production. Through **Stephen Blackpool**, Dickens gives a voice to the working class, depicting the moral suffering and hopelessness caused by **economic exploitation** and **class inequality**.

His portrayal is sympathetic, even though Stephen himself remains somewhat idealized; the realism lies in Dickens’s **exposure of social injustice**.

### 3. Utilitarianism and Moral Emptiness

Dickens satirizes the **utilitarian philosophy** of thinkers like Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, which dominated Victorian social policy. Bounderby, the self-made industrialist, and Gradgrind, the educator, represent this worldview: both equate **material success** with moral worth. The collapse of Gradgrind’s family, his son Tom’s criminality and Louisa’s emotional breakdown, illustrates the **moral bankruptcy of utilitarianism**. By the end of the novel, Gradgrind’s repentance and acknowledgment of “the wisdom of the heart” affirm Dickens’s humanist belief in the **moral superiority of feeling over calculation**.

### 4. Class Division and Social Injustice

The stark contrast between Coketown’s industrial elite and its impoverished workers exposes Dickens’s **social realism**. He depicts a rigid social structure in which the poor have little chance of mobility or dignity. Through Stephen Blackpool’s tragic fate, ostracized by both the ruling class and his fellow workers, Dickens underscores the **alienation and moral paralysis** produced by both **capitalist exploitation** and **collective indifference**. His call for compassion anticipates later reformist movements and aligns with his lifelong campaign for **social justice and moral reform**.

### 5. The Family and Emotional Life

A recurring motif in Dickens’s work, the **family** serves as a moral and emotional barometer of society.

In *Hard Times*, the Gradgrind household, governed by rigid reason, contrasts sharply with the warmth of Sissy Jupe’s circus “family.” Louisa’s emotional repression and eventual breakdown dramatize the human cost of denying affection and imagination. For Dickens, **emotional warmth and human connection** are antidotes to the cold rationalism of the age.

## 2- *Hard Times* as a Realist Novel

Although Dickens’s style often includes **caricature and melodrama**, *Hard Times* exemplifies key **aspects of literary realism**, especially **social realism**.

## 1. Representation of Contemporary Social Issues

Dickens's depiction of Coketown is grounded in real industrial cities like **Preston and Manchester**, capturing the grim reality of factory life, pollution, and worker exploitation. His aim is not mere imitation but **moral illumination**—to awaken readers to the social consequences of industrial progress.

## 2. Psychological Realism

Through characters such as **Louisa Gradgrind** and **Stephen Blackpool**, Dickens explores the **inner emotional conflicts** caused by social systems. Louisa's repressed desires and moral confusion embody the psychological damage inflicted by a repressive education system. This interior focus foreshadows later realist developments in the psychological novel.

## 3. Social Determinism and the Individual

Like later realist writers, Dickens shows how **environment and social structures shape human destiny**. Coketown's oppressive atmosphere reflects and reinforces the mechanized mentality of its inhabitants. Even the novel's language, repetitive and mechanical when describing the town, echoes the deterministic rhythm of industrial life.

## 4. Narrative Objectivity and Moral Engagement

While Dickens's narrator remains **morally involved**, he employs **detailed observation, authentic dialogue, and realistic settings** to portray the world of mid-19th century England. His blend of **satire, sympathy, and social critique** represents a distinctive Victorian realism that seeks **not only to depict but to reform society**.

## Conclusion

In *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens constructs a powerful critique of **industrial capitalism, utilitarian rationalism, and social hypocrisy** through the lens of **realist social fiction**. The novel's central opposition between **fact and fancy** symbolizes the broader moral crisis of Victorian modernity. By portraying the physical and spiritual desolation of Coketown, Dickens exposes the dehumanizing effects of progress divorced from humanity.

Although his characters sometimes verge on allegory, the novel's **realistic representation of class, labour, and social structure** places it among the foundational texts of **English literary realism**. Ultimately, *Hard Times* reaffirms Dickens's conviction that **the heart must guide the intellect**, that compassion and imagination are essential for a just and humane society.

## **Fifth Novel: Charles Dickens's Great Expectations**

### **Introduction**

Published in 1861, *Great Expectations* is one of **Charles Dickens's later works**, written when his vision of society had grown darker and more introspective. Unlike his earlier novels that focus primarily on external social reform (*Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*), *Great Expectations* turns inward to explore **moral growth, self-deception, and social ambition** through the personal journey of **Pip**, an orphan who aspires to become a gentleman.

Set in early Victorian England, the novel dramatizes the **social mobility, class consciousness, and moral contradictions** of a rapidly industrializing society. Its realism lies both in its **detailed depiction of social environments**, from the marshes of Kent to the streets of London, and in its **psychological depth**, which marks a significant evolution in Dickens's art.

## **II. Major Themes in *Great Expectations***

### **1. Social Class and Ambition**

One of the central themes is **class mobility**, the Victorian belief that wealth and status define personal worth.

Pip's life changes when he unexpectedly inherits a fortune and believes Miss Havisham is his benefactor. Convinced that money and education will elevate him socially, Pip becomes **ashamed of his humble origins**, his blacksmith guardian **Joe Gargery**, and his coarse upbringing.

However, Dickens exposes the **moral emptiness** of this aspiration. Pip's "great expectations" lead not to fulfillment but to alienation and guilt. By the end, he learns that **true gentility lies in character, not class**, a lesson taught through Joe's kindness and Magwitch's unexpected humanity.

"There is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice." Pip's reflection encapsulates Dickens's critique of a society that values wealth over virtue.

### **2. Crime, Guilt, and Redemption**

The motif of **crime and punishment** runs throughout the novel, binding together characters from different classes, convicts, gentlemen, and ladies alike. Pip's benefactor turns out to be **Magwitch**, the transported convict he once helped as a child. This revelation subverts Pip's assumptions about morality and class: the criminal has become his saviour, while the supposedly respectable Miss Havisham has destroyed lives out of revenge.

This moral reversal demonstrates Dickens's belief in **human fallibility and moral regeneration**. Both Pip and Magwitch undergo redemption: Magwitch through his paternal love and sacrifice, and Pip through repentance and renewed humility.

### 3. Love and Emotional Growth

Love in *Great Expectations* is often **painful, obsessive, or unrequited**.

- Pip's love for **Estella**, Miss Havisham's adopted daughter, is an illusion shaped by pride and desire for social ascent.
- Estella herself, molded by Miss Havisham to "break men's hearts," is emotionally crippled by her upbringing.

Through these relationships, Dickens explores the **moral education of the heart**, how Pip learns to distinguish genuine affection (Joe's love, Magwitch's gratitude) from false ideals (Estella's cold beauty, Miss Havisham's manipulation).

### 4. Appearance versus Reality

The theme of **illusion and disillusionment** dominates the novel. Pip's mistaken assumptions about his benefactor, Estella, and the nature of "gentility" reflect a broader social deception. Dickens reveals how **appearances, wealth, status, refinement, conceal moral corruption**. Characters such as Jaggers, Wemmick, and Miss Havisham inhabit a world of moral ambiguity, where truth must be uncovered through painful self-awareness.

### 5. The Search for Identity and Moral Maturity

*Great Expectations* is also a **bildungsroman**—a novel of moral and psychological development. Pip's journey from innocence to experience charts the process of **self-discovery**.

His early ambition, moral blindness, and eventual repentance represent the stages of a **spiritual education**.

By the end, Pip learns that identity is shaped not by birth or wealth but by **integrity, love, and compassion**, values that form the moral foundation of Dickens's realism.

## 2- Aspects of Realism in *Great Expectations*

While Dickens's novels often include melodrama and coincidence, *Great Expectations* stands out for its **realist techniques**, especially in character portrayal, setting, and psychological insight.

### 1. Realistic Depiction of Social Environments

Dickens's realism begins with his **detailed representation of Victorian society**, from the rural poverty of the Kent marshes to the corruption and anonymity of London. Each setting reflects a specific social reality:

- **The Marshes** – isolation, fear, and moral innocence.
- **Satis House** – moral decay and the haunting of the past.
- **London** – social ambition, hypocrisy, and corruption.

These spaces are not just backgrounds but **symbolic environments** shaping the characters' moral experience, an important realist device.

## 2. Complex and Evolving Characters

Unlike the flat caricatures of Dickens's early novels, the characters in *Great Expectations* are psychologically complex and capable of **moral change**.

- **Pip** evolves from a naïve boy to a remorseful adult who understands the moral cost of ambition.
- **Magwitch** transcends the stereotype of the criminal; Dickens humanizes him as a victim of circumstance.
- **Miss Havisham**, though eccentric, embodies the realism of emotional trauma and obsession.

This focus on **psychological realism**, inner conflict, self-deception, and remorse, anticipates the modern psychological novel.

## 3. Moral and Social Realism

Dickens's realism is not merely descriptive; it is **ethical**. He exposes the injustices of the class system, the legal profession, and the prison system. Characters like Jaggers (the lawyer) and Wemmick (his clerk) illustrate the **depersonalizing effects** of bureaucracy and capitalism. By giving moral depth to criminals and showing hypocrisy among the "respectable," Dickens challenges conventional moral hierarchies, a hallmark of social realism.

## 4. Realistic Use of Narrative and Perspective

Told in the **first person**, *Great Expectations* offers a retrospective narration, Pip as both protagonist and narrator. This dual perspective creates a sense of **psychological realism**, allowing readers to see both Pip's youthful illusions and his later remorse. The narrative thus mirrors human consciousness, fragmented, self-critical, and shaped by memory and guilt.

## 5. Symbolism within Realism

Though grounded in reality, Dickens uses **symbolic realism**, concrete details that reflect moral truths:

- **Satis House** symbolizes stagnation and emotional death.
- **The river and the misty marshes** suggest moral uncertainty and the difficulty of vision.
- **Fire and decay** evoke the destructive consequences of obsession and pride.

These realistic symbols enhance the moral and emotional dimensions of the narrative.

## Conclusion

*Great Expectations* stands as one of Dickens's most accomplished works of **moral and psychological realism**.

Through Pip's journey from illusion to moral awareness, Dickens explores the **corrupting influence of class ambition**, the **possibility of redemption**, and the **human need for love and moral integrity**.

The novel's realism lies not only in its vivid social settings and accurate portrayal of Victorian life but also in its **psychological truthfulness**, its portrayal of guilt, moral growth, and the painful process of self-recognition.

Ultimately, *Great Expectations* offers a deeply human vision: that **true greatness lies in humility, compassion, and moral awakening**, not in wealth or social privilege. Dickens thus bridges **social realism** with **moral idealism**, creating a novel that speaks as powerfully to the heart as it does to the conscience.

# **Lesson Five: Theoretical Background on English Naturalism**

## **Introduction**

Naturalism emerged in the late 19th century as an extension, and radicalization, of Realism. While Realism aimed to portray life accurately, Naturalism sought to apply scientific principles (especially from biology, sociology, and psychology) to the study of human beings in literature. It portrayed humans as shaped by heredity, environment, and social conditions beyond their control.

### **1. Historical Context**

English Naturalism emerged in the late nineteenth century as a development of literary Realism and as a response to profound intellectual, scientific, and social changes. The publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin revolutionized the understanding of human existence by introducing the theory of evolution and natural selection. Human beings were no longer seen primarily as spiritual or divinely guided creatures, but as biological organisms shaped by heredity and environment. This scientific determinism deeply influenced Naturalist writers.

At the same time, the Industrial Revolution had transformed England into an urban, industrial society marked by poverty, overcrowding, and harsh working conditions. The growth of cities such as London and Manchester exposed extreme social inequalities. The philosophical ideas of thinkers like Karl Marx also contributed to a materialist understanding of society, emphasizing economic forces and class struggle. English Naturalism developed within this context of scientific materialism, social crisis, and skepticism toward romantic idealism.

Although Naturalism began in France with Émile Zola, its principles influenced English writers such as Thomas Hardy and George Gissing, who portrayed human life as governed by forces beyond individual control.

### **2. Definition of Naturalism**

Naturalism is a literary movement that extends Realism by applying scientific principles to the study of human behavior. It views life as determined by heredity, environment, and social conditions. Unlike Romanticism, which emphasizes imagination and individual freedom, Naturalism presents human beings as products of biological instincts and external forces.

Naturalist writers adopt an almost scientific attitude toward their subjects. They observe, document, and analyze characters as if conducting experiments. The individual is often powerless against fate, social forces, or inner drives. In this sense, Naturalism can be described as “pessimistic Realism,” since it frequently portrays suffering, failure, and moral decline as inevitable outcomes of deterministic forces.

### **3. Key Themes of English Naturalism**

One of the central themes of English Naturalism is **determinism**. Characters are shaped by heredity and environment, and their lives unfold according to forces they cannot escape. In Hardy's novels, for example, fate and social convention often destroy the hopes of the protagonists.

Another major theme is **the struggle for survival**, influenced by the Darwinian theory. Life is depicted as a harsh competition in which only the strong endure. Poverty, illness, and social oppression play decisive roles in shaping human destiny.

Naturalist literature also emphasizes **social criticism**. Writers expose the harsh realities of industrial society, urban misery, exploitation of workers, rigid class systems, and the limited roles available to women. In doing so, they challenge the optimistic view of progress that characterized earlier Victorian thought.

A further theme is **alienation and isolation**. Characters often feel trapped in indifferent or hostile environments, cut off from meaningful spiritual or emotional fulfillment.

#### **4. Key Aspects and Features**

English Naturalism is characterized by detailed, objective descriptions of settings, particularly urban slums or rural communities affected by modernization. The environment is not simply a background but an active force influencing characters' actions and destinies.

Another important feature is the focus on ordinary or lower-class characters. Instead of heroic individuals, Naturalist writers depict workers, peasants, and marginalized figures whose lives reveal the pressures of economic and biological necessity.

Naturalist works often adopt a serious, sometimes pessimistic tone. The narrative voice tends to be detached and analytical, minimizing overt moral judgment. Events may end tragically, reinforcing the idea that individuals cannot easily overcome structural forces.

Finally, Naturalism frequently explores taboo or controversial subjects—sexual desire, poverty, violence, and moral degradation—treating them not as sensational elements but as natural aspects of human existence shaped by instinct and circumstance.

#### **Conclusion**

English Naturalism represents a shift from moral and idealistic interpretations of life toward a scientific and deterministic vision of human existence. Influenced by Darwinian science, industrial capitalism, and social theory, Naturalist writers portrayed individuals as products of heredity and environment, often trapped in conditions beyond their control. Through its emphasis on objectivity, social critique, and pessimism, Naturalism occupies a significant place in the development of modern English literature and paved the way for twentieth-century literary experimentation.

## 4. Major Writers and Works

### 4.1 France

#### Émile Zola

- *Germinal* (1885)
- *Thérèse Raquin* (1867)
- *L'Assommoir* (1877)
- *Nana* (1880)
- *La Bête Humaine* (1890)

#### Guy de Maupassant

- Short stories such as “The Necklace,” “Boule de Suif”
- *Bel-Ami*

#### Joris-Karl Huysmans

- *Marthe*
- Early works before his Symbolist turn

### 4.2 American Naturalism

American writers adapted Naturalism to the context of industrial capitalism, urban expansion, and social diversity.

#### Stephen Crane

- *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893)
- *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)

## Conclusion

Naturalism was a powerful movement that extended Realism into the domain of science and determinism. It portrayed life without illusions and emphasized the powerful forces, biological, environmental, social, that shape human destiny. Its influence continues in contemporary literature, film, and social criticism.

**Assignment 03:** Prepare oral presentations in which you provide literary analyses of the following literary works from a Naturalist perspective.

- Hardy, Thomas. *Jude the Obscure*.
- Somerset. M. *Liza of Lambeth*.

### Analyses of Sample Naturalist Literary Works

## Novel One: Literary Analysis of *Liza of Lambeth* (1897)

### 1. Introduction

*Liza of Lambeth* is W. Somerset Maugham's debut novel and one of the clearest examples of British Naturalism. Inspired by Maugham's experience as a medical student working in Lambeth, the novel provides a stark, unidealized look at working-class life in late-Victorian London. Although Naturalism was never as dominant in Britain as in France or the United States, Maugham's novel adopts many of its central conventions: **environmental determinism, heredity, social forces, urban poverty, violence**, and a **pessimistic view of life's outcomes**.

### 2. Aspects of Naturalism in the Novel

#### A. Environmental Determinism

Naturalism emphasizes the way **place** shapes **character** and **destiny**. In Lambeth:

- Streets are overcrowded and dirty.
- Houses are cramped, unhealthy, and oppressive.
- Public spaces (streets, courts, pubs) are sites of conflict, gossip, and violence.

Characters do not transcend their environment; they remain shaped by it. **Liza's fate** is tied to her surroundings: her limited options, economic strain, and social norms push her into an affair that ultimately destroys her socially and physically.

**Key point:** The environment is not a background but a **determinant force**.

#### B. Social Forces and Class Constraints

Naturalism often reveals how **social class traps individuals**

In Lambeth:

- Poverty restricts choices, especially for women.
- Marriage is shown as transactional and often violent or oppressive.
- The community exerts strong moral surveillance; gossip functions as social control.
- Work is monotonous, offering no upward mobility.

**Naturalist angle:** Society, not free will, dictates characters' actions and outcomes.

#### C. Biological Drives, Instinct, and Desire

Like many Naturalist works, the novel shows humans driven by **instincts**, not pure rationality.

- Liza is drawn to Jim because of natural, physical desire, not romantic idealism.
- Characters often act spontaneously, fighting, drinking, guided by immediate impulses.

This emphasis on **instinct over reason** aligns with Naturalist thinking influenced by Darwinism.

#### **D. Violence, Brutality, and the Harshness of Life**

Violence is a frequent and almost normalized occurrence:

- Domestic violence is common and treated as a “fact of life.”
- The novel depicts fights between neighbours, men, and women.
- Liza’s physical injury contributes to her tragic end.

Violence becomes a **natural consequence** of poverty, overcrowding, and emotional repression, not an anomaly.

#### **E. Pessimism and Fatalism**

Naturalism typically presents life as harsh and outcomes as grim.

- Liza’s dreams of affection or escape are crushed by social realities.
- Her death is not heroic, redemptive, or moralized, it is simply the grim end of a predictable path.
- Maugham avoids sentimentality; events unfold with a cold, observational tone.

The novel’s **tragic inevitability** reinforces the Naturalist worldview: **people cannot escape the forces that shape their existence.**

#### **F. Objective, Almost Clinical Narrative Tone**

Maugham writes with a detached, observational style:

- No moral judgment about Liza’s affair.
- No sentimental justification or condemnation.
- Scenes are described with the precision of an observer or reporter.

This tone mirrors Zola’s influence on Naturalist fiction, the author as a “scientist” studying human behaviour.

### **3. Key Themes in *Liza of Lambeth***

## **I. Poverty and Working-Class Life**

The novel is a social document of:

- Poor housing
- Limited leisure
- Hard labor
- Alcohol dependence
- Community surveillance and judgment

These conditions create a deterministic setting where social mobility is nonexistent.

## **II. Female Vulnerability and Social Double Standards**

Women suffer the most under the community's moral expectations:

- They are judged more harshly for sexual transgressions.
- Domestic abuse is normalized.
- Liza is blamed, ostracized, and punished far more severely than Jim.
- Her body becomes the site of both desire and violence.

This theme fits Naturalism's exploration of how **gender and class combine to reduce agency**.

## **III. Hypocrisy and Moral Judgment in the Community**

Despite widespread immorality, violence, and gossip, the community maintains rigid moral codes, particularly around female sexuality.

Naturalism highlights how collective behaviour can be:

- Cruel
- Inconsistent
- Driven by instinct and insecurity

The community's hostility accelerates Liza's downfall.

## **IV. Desire and its Consequence**

Desire is portrayed as natural and unavoidable, a force beyond reason.

- Liza's attraction to Jim is depicted without moralizing.
- This contributes to the deterministic framing of her tragedy.

## **V. Violence and the Cycle of Abuse**

Violence is cyclical, almost hereditary:

- Mrs. Blakeston beats her children; Jim beats his wife.
- Violence becomes a learned response to stress and frustration.

- Liza becomes both a victim and a witness of this cycle.

Naturalism interprets such brutality as the **product of environment + instinct**, not individual evil.

## VI. Urban Alienation

Despite living in densely inhabited streets, characters suffer emotional isolation.

- Liza lacks true companionship or support.
- Relationships are driven by necessity, not emotional depth.
- Neighbours are quick to judge but slow to help.

This reflects Naturalism's portrayal of the city as **dehumanizing**.

## 5. Conclusion

*Liza of Lambeth* is a foundational text of British Naturalism because it:

- Exposes the deterministic forces of poverty and environment
- Reveals how instinctual drives shape human behavior
- Depicts violence and sexuality with unsentimental realism
- Emphasizes pessimism and social entrapment
- Shows a community governed by instinct, gossip, and hypocrisy

Maugham's debut anticipates later Naturalist works by American writers like Dreiser, Crane, and Norris, but maintains a distinctly British focus on social class and urban poverty.

## Second Novel: A Naturalist Reading of *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy

### 1- Author Biography

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) was born in Dorset, England, in a rural region he later fictionalized as **Wessex**. Initially trained as an architect, Hardy turned to fiction and became one of the major novelists of the late Victorian period. His works often depict the decline of rural life under industrial modernity and the harsh constraints of social convention.

Published in 1895, *Jude the Obscure* was Hardy's final novel. Its controversial treatment of marriage, religion, sexuality, and social institutions provoked strong criticism, leading Hardy to abandon novel-writing and focus exclusively on poetry. The pessimism and determinism of the novel align closely with **literary naturalism**, which emphasizes heredity, environment, and social forces over individual free will.

### 2- Character Analysis

## 1. Jude Fawley

Jude is a working-class orphan who dreams of becoming a scholar at Christminster (a fictional Oxford). His aspirations represent individual ambition; however, naturalist logic defeats him.

- **Heredity:** Jude comes from a family marked by failed marriages and emotional instability.
- **Environment:** Poverty prevents him from obtaining formal education.
- **Social class barriers:** Victorian educational institutions are closed to men of his background.
- **Psychological determinism:** He is driven by romantic idealism and sexual desire, which lead him into destructive relationships.

Jude becomes a victim of forces beyond his control, a key naturalist trait.

## 2. Sue Bridehead

Sue is intellectually independent and skeptical of religion and marriage. She resists Victorian norms but is psychologically conflicted.

- She embodies **modern ideas** but cannot escape internalized moral guilt.
- After the death of her children, she submits to religious fatalism.
- Her intellectual freedom collapses under social and emotional pressure.

Sue illustrates how environment and ideology shape even the most rebellious individual.

## 3. Arabella Donn

Arabella represents instinct, sensuality, and biological survival.

- She manipulates Jude into marriage through pregnancy.
- She adapts easily to circumstances.
- Unlike Jude and Sue, she survives because she embraces pragmatic, almost animalistic realism.

In naturalist fiction, characters who adapt often survive; idealists perish.

## 3- Major Themes in a Naturalist Framework

### 1. Determinism and Fate

The novel suggests that:

- Family patterns repeat themselves.
- Individuals cannot escape social destiny.
- Personal will is insufficient against structural forces.

Jude's failure is not moral weakness but structural inevitability.

## **2. Social Class and Education**

Christminster symbolizes institutional exclusion.

- Education is reserved for elites.
- Merit alone does not guarantee mobility.
- Victorian society enforces rigid class hierarchy.

Naturalism exposes society as a machine that crushes aspiration.

## **3. Marriage and Desire**

Hardy critiques Victorian marriage laws.

- Jude's marriage to Arabella is impulsive and biologically driven.
- Sue and Jude's unconventional union is socially condemned.
- Marriage becomes a social trap rather than romantic fulfillment.

Naturalism treats sexuality as instinctual, not idealized.

## **4. Religion and Moral Oppression**

Sue's return to religion after tragedy reflects:

- Psychological trauma
- Internalized social morality
- The oppressive weight of Christian doctrine

Religion becomes a social instrument reinforcing guilt and suffering.

## **5. Suffering and the Indifference of the Universe**

The shocking death of the children (Little Father Time's act) intensifies naturalistic pessimism.

The message implied:

Life is governed by impersonal, indifferent forces.

The universe does not reward virtue or punish vice consistently.

### **4- Language and Style**

Hardy's language supports naturalism through:

#### **1. Detailed Social Realism**

- Precise descriptions of rural labor.
- Concrete depiction of working-class life.

## 2. Symbolism of Setting

- Christminster = unreachable ideal.
- Weather and landscape mirror psychological states.
- Wessex functions as an environmental force shaping behavior.

## 3. Irony and Authorial Intrusion

Hardy often uses ironic commentary to emphasize:

- The gap between aspiration and reality.
- The cruelty of social institutions.

## 4. Plain yet Poetic Prose

Though lyrical at times, Hardy avoids romantic glorification. His prose often undercuts hope with grim realism.

## 5- Aspects of Naturalism in the Novel

Naturalist Feature	Example in <i>Jude the Obscure</i>
Determinism	Jude's repeated failure despite effort
Hereditary influence	Family history of unhappy marriages
Social conditioning	Class barriers block education
Biological drives	Sexual attraction leading to marriage
Pessimism	Tragic ending and lack of redemption
Environment as force	Rural poverty shaping destiny

## Conclusion

From a naturalist perspective, *Jude the Obscure* presents human life as governed less by free will than by:

- Economic conditions
- Social institutions
- Biological impulses
- Psychological inheritance

Jude's tragedy is not heroic in a Romantic sense; it is clinical, almost scientific. Hardy dissects society like a social laboratory, revealing the crushing machinery of class, marriage, religion, and heredity.

The novel stands as one of the clearest expressions of English literary naturalism, a work in which aspiration collides with determinism, and hope yields to systemic inevitability.

**Final Evaluation:**

Choose one of the following topics:

**Topic One:**

**I: Fill in the gaps with the appropriate words to get a coherent meaningful passage (04pts).**

Romanticism is a literary movement that emerged in ..... (place) in the ..... (time). It developed as a reaction against ..... and ..... . Its key features included: ....., ....., ..... and ..... (Mention only 4 features).

**II: Answer the following questions (06pts).**

1- Can a “happy ending” be expected in Naturalist literature? Why or Why not?

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.....  
.....

2- Which type of characters did Naturalist literature portray?

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.....  
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3- Did Naturalist writers seek social reform? Why or Why not?

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4- Does the tone in Naturalist writings lean more towards subjectivity or objectivity? Justify your answer.

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5- Do you agree with the Naturalist assumptions and world view? Justify your answer.

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.....

**Part Two: (10pts)**

Realist literature is characterized by its exploration of the rigid class structures of Victorian Society, ambition, and the struggle for respectability.

In a coherent paragraph, explain how the theme of **social mobility** is tackled in Realist literature.

Illustrate with reference to Realist literary works of your own choice.

## Topic Two:

**I: Fill in the gaps with the appropriate words to get a coherent meaningful passage (04pts).**

Naturalism emerged in ..... (time) as a ..... of Realism. It was intellectually rooted in the theory of ..... which led to the belief that human behaviour is ..... by heredity, ..... and social conditions. Its key features included: ....., ....., ..... and ..... (Mention only 4 features).

**II: Answer the following questions (06pts).**

1- What was the attitude of Romantics towards spirituality? Explain.

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2- Was Romantic poetry subjective or objective? Justify your answer.

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3- Why did Romantic literature exhibit Gothic features?

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4- Was the female figure positively or negatively portrayed in Romantic literature? Justify your answer.

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5- Do you agree with the Romantic assumptions and world view? Justify your answer.

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**Part Two: (10pts)**

The limited social roles available for women in Victorian Society and their dependence on marriage for social and financial security were major concerns for Realist writers.

In a coherent paragraph, explain how the theme of **marriage and gender roles** is tackled in Realist literature.

Illustrate with reference to Realist literary works of your own choice.

**Correction of the Final Evaluation:**

## Topic One:

**I: Fill in the gaps with the appropriate words to get a coherent meaningful passage (04pts).**

Romanticism is a literary movement that emerged in **Europe (0.5)** in **the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (0.5)**. It developed as a reaction against the **Age of Reason (0.5)** and the **Industrial Revolution (0.5)**. Its key features included: **Humanism (0.5)**, **Individualism (0.5)**, **Emotions over reason (0.5)** and **celebrating nature (0.5)**.

**II: Answer the following questions (06pts).**

1- Can a “happy ending” be expected in Naturalist literature? Why or Why not?

**No, it cannot. (0.5)**

Justification: the notions of **Pessimism** and **Determinism. (0.5)**

2- Which type of characters did Naturalist literature portray?

**Ordinary people from lower social classes; often poor workers, criminals, immigrants,... (01)**

3- Did Naturalist writers seek social reform? Why or Why not?

**No, they did not. (0.5)**

Justification: **They just sought to portray life and society objectively. (0.5)**

4- Does the tone in Naturalist writings lean more towards subjectivity or objectivity?

Justify your answer.

Naturalist writings lean more towards **Objectivity. (0.5)**

Justification: **Because of the purely scientific world view. (01)**

5- Do you agree with the Naturalist assumptions and world view? Justify your answer.

**All well-justified answers are accepted. (1.5)**

**Part Two: (10pts)**

Language accuracy and coherence	02.5 pts
Explaining the theme	02.5 pts
Illustrations from relevant literary works	05pts

**Topic Two:**

**I: Fill in the gaps with the appropriate words to get a coherent meaningful passage (04pts).**

Naturalism emerged in **the 19<sup>th</sup> century (0.5)** as a **Continuation/extension/radicalization (0.5)** of Realism. It was intellectually rooted in the theory of **Darwinism (0.5)** which led to the belief that human behaviour is determined **(0.5)** by heredity, environment (0.5) and social conditions. Its key features included: **Determinism (0.5)**, **scientific tone (0.5)**, **objectivity (0.5)** and **the struggle against stronger forces (0.5)**

**II: Answer the following questions (06pts).**

1- What was the attitude of Romantics towards spirituality? Explain.

**Romantics stood against all forms of institutionalized religion. (01)**

2- Was Romantic poetry subjective or objective? Justify your answer.

**It was subjective. (0.5)**

Justification: **Because Romantics emphasized feelings, emotions and individualism. (0.5)**

3- Why did Romantic literature exhibit Gothic features?

**Fear was also celebrated as it is a human feeling. (01)**

4- Was the female figure positively or negatively portrayed in Romantic literature? Justify your answer.

**It was a positive portrayal. (0.5)**

Justification: **The female figure was often idealized in Romantic literature. (01)**

5- Do you agree with the Romantic assumptions and world view? Justify your answer.

**All well-justified answers are accepted. (1.5)**

**Part Two: (10pts)**

Language accuracy and coherence	02.5 pts
Explaining the theme	02.5 pts
Illustrations from relevant literary works	05pts



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