



## CRITICAL REALISM IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

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### Annotation

We are living in realistic world. But the word “realism” appeared in literature as a separate trend and lots of authors attempted to open this term in their own way. Such authors are Mark Twain in American literature and Charles Dickens in England. Both of the authors wrote what existed in their time and their main purpose was to critically discuss the conditions of their countries. In this article broad definition of the term ‘realism’ and the contributions of gigantic American and British writers are illustrated with ample evidences.

### Аннотация

Мы живем в реалистичном мире. Но само слово «реализм» появилось в литературе как отдельное направление, и многие авторы пытались по-своему раскрыть этот термин. Такими авторами являются Марк Твен в американской литературе и Чарльз Диккенс в Англии. Оба автора писали то, что существовало в их время, и их главной целью было критически обсудить условия своих стран. В этой статье широкое определение термина «реализм» и вклады гигантских американских и британских писателей проиллюстрированы достаточными доказательствами.

### Annotatsiya

Biz realistic dunyoda yashayapmiz. Lekin “realism” so’zi alohida adabiy janr sifatida adabiyotda paydo bo’lgan va ko’plab yozuvchilar o’z uslublarida ushbu janrda ijod qilganlar. Shunday yozuvchilardan amerika adabiyoti namoyondalaridan biri Mark Twain va ingliz adabiyoti vakili Charliz Dikenslardir. Ikkila yozuvchilar ham o’z davrlari muhitini yoritishga harakat qilganlar va asosiy maqsad qilib o’z mamlakatlaridagi vaziyatni tanqidiy muhokama qilganlar. Ushbu maqola ‘realizm’ atamasini kengroq izohlaydi va buyuk amerika va ingliz yozuvchilarining realizm yo’nalishiga qo’shgan hissasini misollar bilan ko’rsatadi.

**Keywords:** realism, Victorian age, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, realistic characters, Chartism, romantism.





## Introduction

Realism is a way of seeing, accepting and dealing with situations as they really are without being influenced by emotions or hopes. Realism is a style in art or literature that shows things and people as they are in real life. (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 1998) As a literary movement, realism began in France in the 1850s and it was a reaction against Romanticism which was a style and movement in art, music and literature in the late XVIII century and early XIX century, in which strong feelings, imagination and a return to nature were more important than reason, order and intellectual ideas (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 1998). One term that is often used in connection with realism is *slice of life*. That is to say, a realistic writer takes a slice of the real world and examines it in almost the same manner as a scientist examines a leaf under the microscope.

In England, this movement happened at the same time with the “Victorian Age”, when Queen Victoria ruled the country (1837-1901) and the British Empire reached its height and also the period of the Industrial Revolution. The United Kingdom spread out its territory towards America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania and got the first economic and political world power. A lot of critics prefer to speak about the “Victorian Age”, since many of the well-known English novelists of the period are not realistic in the same style as their French or Russian colleagues.

However, a number of realistic novels are exactly the most essential literary form of the period, excellent novels were read by a large number of educated middle class that were economically developed. The 19th century had specific characters because it was an age of progress: railways and ships were constructed, great scientific discoveries were done, education spread more widely; but simultaneously, it was a period of great social unrest, as there existed too much poverty, too much unfairness. As scientific inventions grew, it mechanized industry and raised wealth, yet this rise only made rich the few at the cost of the many. Dirty factories, long working hours, children's work, exploitation, low income, slums and frequent unemployment – these were the living conditions of the workers in the developing industries of England, which were the most affluent country in the world towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By 1830s English capitalism had entered a new development stage. England had become an industrial capitalistic country. The Industrial Revolution gathered powers as the XIX century developed, and great alterations in hand- looms made way, to factory towns, railroads, and steamships.

The number of people living in Manchester, Birmingham and other industrial centers was increasing sharply as factory workers' number grew, whereas poor farmers' number declined and a lot of people abandoned their villages. Main social classes in





England were no longer the peasants and the landlords but in fact, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

After aristocracy had lost, the bourgeoisie ignored the interests of the working class. Of course, workers fought for their rights. Their demands on politics were written in the People's Charter in 1833. Considered as a revolutionary movement of the English workers, the Chartist Movement lasted until 1848.

The Chartists acquainted their literature, which was the prime attempt to create a working class literature. The Chartist writers wrote at varied genres. They wrote songs, poems, articles, short stories, epigrams. Their leading genre became poetry.

The ideas of the Chartism appealed the many progressive – minded people's attention. Lots of famous writers were aware of the social unfairness around them and tried to show them through their works. Because of this that period was reflected in literature by the emerging of a new trend, the critical Realism. England is well known as a cradle of realism. According to Marx, Realism was called "the present brilliant school of English novelists whose graphic and eloquent descriptions have revealed more political and social truths to the world."

The greatest novelists of the age are Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell. However, Critical Realism as a trend in American literature fully developed after the Civil War. But before the Civil War writers turned their thought to the material environment surrounded them. The sudden and deep changes in the country, human relation's new type forced them to see man as a product of his own environment, to face actual facts and realities.

Until that time writers build their stories around ideal individuals by which they represented their own personal emotions and reactions. New generation writers no longer satisfied with this; they understood that the people must be mirrored as a whole, the life of the individual connected with life of other human beings.

The highly critical realistic literature that came into being differed greatly from that of the previous generation represented by Irving, Cooper and Longfellow.

Mark Twain in his "Gilded Age" wrote: "The eight years in America from 1860 to 1868 uprooted institutions that were centuries old, changed the politics of a people, transformed the social life of half the country and wrought so profoundly upon the entire national character that the influence cannot be measured."

Critical Realism included all types of American life. A lot of old themes were left unchanged but they were treated in a new light containing love, and of the role of art and the artist in society. If the romantic school had treated love as a means of getting rid of common life problems; the realists used the theme to illustrate the immorality of bourgeois society which made love and marriage matter of business.





The realists saw man on the background of social in harmony of the day and made analysis human nature and human feelings in relation to this background. The reader easily could image the past and the future of each literary character as the development of the image was closely related to the historical growth of the present. The American realists rejected sentimentality and the "genteel tradition" in the style of writing. Their portrayal of life, as they found it, may sometimes have been rude and unpolished but it was always original and truthful. Mark Twain, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Jack London and Theodore Dreiser belonged to this type of writers of that period whose creative works were brilliant examples of mature realism.

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