

An Analysis of the Literary Realism Movement and Its Impact

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ABSTRACT

The Literary Realism movement was a movement established globally with heavy influence in the United States during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras. The Realism movement defies the Romanticism movement, with people favoring truth over falsity and reality over imagination. This research essay examines and analyzes the Literary Realism movement and its impact on the United States. This essay incorporated historical research with consultation from the history department head to provide a concise and accurate description of the historical context behind the Literary Realism movement. Additionally, this essay employed constructive research for evidence that supported the values and beliefs of the Literary Realism movement. Moreover, this research essay incorporated a study of the genre and the style of the Literary Realism movement to analyze the impact of the Literary Realism movement effectively. Finally, this essay included three fictional literary works plus two non-fictional authors and their compositions to synthesize the significance of Literary Realist authors during the Literary Realism movement. This paper, therefore, affirms an insightful analysis of the Literary Realism movement and its influence in the United States.

I. Introduction

Romanticism dominated art and literature in the 19th century until Literary Realism emerged. Literary Realism has two definitions: a movement that takes a mundane yet pragmatic vantage point towards quotidian circumstances and a movement that emphasizes practical suggestions that apply to a person. Literary Realism, in its first definition, delves into the elusive, obscure nuances of national conflicts and their aftermaths, such as the American Civil War and its ramifications across communities like Black Americans and Women. Furthermore, a select quantity of Realism literature also reveals practical, helpful advice for life. Literature aims to help people escape society's perils; however, with Literary Realism, literature may place its audience into the depths of reality. Literary Realism derives its principles from its historical context and values, influencing its genre and style seen in the impact on significant authors during this era.

II. Historical Context

Synopsis of the Civil War

Civil War Causes

The purpose of Literary Realism is to engage its audience by stating the truth through a simple interpretation without exaggerations. The historical context of literary Realism caused readers to want to read the truth of the moment, which such a question derives from the historical context of Literary Realism. Literary Realism originated from the American

Civil War, which was a conflict over the institution of slavery that divided the United States. American slavery developed for the same reasons as the triangle trade: “Europe [engages] in the Atlantic trade, which eventually [led] to the accumulation of enormous wealth” (Josipović and Vujeva 180). To derive Europe’s immense wealth accumulation from their exports, European nations first “offer lower final price” to attain enslaved Africans (Josipović and Vujeva 181). Furthermore, obtaining cheaper enslaved people helps make products affordable to other nations because a more inferior labor force will require minimum effort to satisfy the enslaved laborer’s measures. Europe lacked the labor to extract the wealth, in the form of raw materials, from the western hemisphere. As a result, trade in human beings from Africa became crucial to American colonization. In the New World (present-day North America), European colonies utilized enslaved African Americans and their descendants for plantation farming with tobacco, sugar, and cotton. The objectification and mistreatment of enslaved African Americans as factory farm animals or means of production became an integral facet of the argument of anti-slavery.

Therefore, the Civil War’s principal cause of the war was the tensions growing from the American slavery institution, which one prominent figure like Frederick Douglass worked to collapse slavery. Frederick Douglass advocated collapsing the slavery convention due to his past, where he suffered the vile acts of his owners. Frederick Douglass’ motivation to disintegrate American slavery derives from learning basic literacy skills from Sophia Auld, who teaches little Douglass the alphabet. After hearing from Mrs. Auld’s husband not to instruct little Douglass literacy and listening to why not to teach him, Douglass found the motivation to study his English skills to advocate for anti-slavery. A few years into Douglass’ life, Douglass convinces Abraham Lincoln to think about the Blacks and consider reconciling Blacks from the bondage of White men. Popular to contrary belief, Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation did not entirely grant freedom to African Americans. The Emancipation Proclamation helped African Americans, who were in subjugation, obtain release from rebel states (the Confederacy). However, that is not to say that the Emancipation Proclamation was useless. The release of the Emancipation Proclamation paved the way for the thirteenth amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which grants emancipation to all enslaved people stuck from involuntary servitude. Therefore, the sadistic acts of the American slavery institution are the leading motivation for the Civil War.

Moreover, another cause of the American Civil War is government interventions from continuing pressure to oppress the American slavery institution, such as the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. “In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act [allowed] for a territory to become free or slave at the will of the majority of voters in the territory” (Eichenberg 184). The Kansas-Nebraska Act resulted in Bloody Kansas, a violent battle between “rival guerrilla bands or perhaps even gangs raiding and [countervailing], attacking individuals, homesteads, newspaper offices, and even churches” (Eichenberg 184). The nomenclature for the term rival guerrilla derives from historians describing the divide between pro-slavery versus anti-slavery groups. The first pressure between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups started from the “New England Emigrant Aid Society’s effort to send anti-slavery emigrants to Kansas,” which “raised the ire of the ultra-pro-slavery people on Missouri’s western border” (Napier 46). Consequently, the pro-slavery people “[organized] groups sympathetic to [their] cause,” which concluded in “a “draconian set of laws protecting slavery” (Napier 46). Passing laws to protect slavery resulted in bloody warfare between pro-slavery supporters and anti-slavery activists.

Civil War Resolutions

Like with many wars, there is some resolution that two sides meet to resolve their conflicts. After the American Civil War, some resolutions include Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, the Freedmen’s Bureau, and the Civil Rights Act of 1866. In summary, Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation was a document that allowed enslaved men in Union territories to attain release from forced servitude. Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not grant all enslaved people immediate freedom, its influence resulted in the thirteenth amendment. Also, the Emancipation Proclamation helped shift the focus of the war from fighting between the Union and Confederacy to making amends to end the American slavery institution that plagues human rights in the United States. Another resolution

from the Civil War is the Freedmen's bureau which helps African Americans in the South by providing protection and survival amenities after release from slavery. During Reconstruction, many formerly enslaved people lived in poverty after the Civil War disintegrated slavery institution. Therefore, Congress wanted to solve the issue of many African Americans that lived in destitution, which led to the Freedmen's Bureau. The Freedmen's Bureau provided African Americans amenities like schools, food pantries, and services such as land leasing and legalizing marriages. Finally, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 is another resolution of the Civil War. The act institutes that all people, regardless of race, skin color, or past regards with slavery, become citizens. In other words, the act ensures that people in the United States will not experience discrimination. However, discrimination is inevitable as every individual has complexions with multi-faceted views unique to them. If everyone in the world agrees with each other, then World Peace becomes straightforward to accomplish. However, if people have no debates, how can one expect creativity? Creativity is what powers or develops the foundations for critical thinking, a skill that helps people learn to develop sound decisions. Thus, the Civil Rights Act can prevent discrimination based on race, gender, or another background for career opportunities; however, individuals ultimately influence how they perceive certain groups. Nevertheless, the Emancipation Proclamation, Freedmen's Bureau, and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 are resolutions from the Civil War.

Events of the Civil War

Political Events

The American Civil War has many political events with some degree of gravity to affect the result. However, three major political events of the Civil War include the Election of Abraham Lincoln, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the Reconstruction Era. The Election of Abraham Lincoln accounts as a significant event of the Civil War since Abraham Lincoln is an arbiter that ultimately rules in favor of supporting emancipation for African Americans (anti-slavery), which results in undermining confederacy principles (pro-slavery). Abraham Lincoln's support for anti-slavery and agreement with the doctrines that Frederick Douglass believes, which perhaps mentions Lincoln's empathy with Douglass. To elaborate, one must trace Lincoln's history, which begins with "Lincoln [struggling] for a living and for learning" ("Abraham Lincoln"). Furthermore, "[Lincoln's] mother, who died in [his] tenth year" and "[Lincoln's] father ... removed from Kentucky to ... Indiana, in [Lincoln's] eighth year" resembles Douglass' parents' kismet ("Abraham Lincoln"). To illustrate, Douglass' parents were in a similar situation where Douglass' mother died during Douglass' youth while Douglass did not know his father, who 'disappeared' on him. Therefore, Douglass's arguments resonated with Lincoln.

Apart from the Election of Abraham Lincoln, the Battle of Gettysburg was also an integral Civil War political event. The Battle of Gettysburg, in summary, was a ferocious war that involved Confederate Army general Robert E. Lee who tried to "destroy the Union army or capture a major Northern city." Robert E. Lee's plans fell short when an "unsuccessful charge led by George Pickett, proved futile, and destroyed a key part of the Confederate army" (Newman and Schmalbach 277). Such a fruitless assault led to proof that Confederate General Lee's army was weak. Thus, the Battle of Gettysburg made reality inescapable due to an aggressive ambiance emanated by the Confederacy versus the Union side.

Then, the Reconstruction Era was a major political event after the American Civil War, where it supposedly should reconstruct America, but ironically did not. For one, the Reconstruction Era depicts "illiterate African Americans and corrupt Northern carpetbaggers [abusing] the rights of Southern Whites," which undermines respecting promises for citizenship for all races (Newman and Schmalbach 303). Furthermore, abolishing slavery was somewhat of an understatement for the concept of sharecropping, as sharecropping means to provide "shares" or stocks of crops to a landowner in exchange for giving the land. Although sharecropping may seem optimistic, it is economic slavery, binding the tenant to the proprietor, which limits freedom for the lessee. Nonetheless, political outcomes during and immediately after the Civil War transformed how the United States operated. Necessary amendments to the Constitution (13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments) paved paths for allowing everyone to reap freedom and participate in their

country. Nevertheless, the election of Abraham Lincoln, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the Reconstruction period prove to be three major political events from the Civil War.

Social Events:

The American Civil War accomplished social changes. Two primary social events affecting the Civil War include advocating for African American and Women's rights. To reiterate, one facet of the Civil War was advocating for the removal of the American Slavery system. Its terrors from figures like Frederick Douglass influenced the Northern part of the United States to fight for granting African Americans freedom. As aforementioned, Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (one noteworthy achievement of the U.S. from the Civil War) helps African-Americans obtain release from slavery in union states. Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not wholly help fulfill the deprecation of the American slavery institution, the Emancipation Proclamation did pave the way for abolishing slavery, which its result leads to the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. The 13th amendment abolished slavery in "the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" ("The 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution"). The 14th amendment "[grants] citizenship to all persons 'born or naturalized in the United States'" ("Landmark Legislation: The Fourteenth Amendment"). The 15th amendment provides the right to vote without denial "by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" ("The 15th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution"). Furthermore, the Emancipation Proclamation gave voice to African Americans, specifically "Black Minnesotans, [who] made their opinion on suffrage known in 1865" (Gannaway 75). Black Minnesotans want their opinion of African American suffrage known due to the debate over Reconstruction. More concretely, "Winonans [(City in Minnesota)] [debate] Reconstruction and the role of African Americans in public life," which leaves a divide (Gannaway 75). On one side, Winonan Radical Republicans believe in equal treatment and enfranchisement of the formerly enslaved people, while Winonan Moderate Republicans believe otherwise (Gannaway 75). To resolve such an argument, Douglass "begins by dispelling any notion that the Civil War or the Union victory affirmed the strength of the U.S. Constitution" (Gannaway 78). For some, like Douglass, the Civil War was about African American civil rights. However, that was not the perception of all Americans. Therefore, advocating for African American rights was a social event of the Civil War.

Moreover, advocating for women's rights was a significant American Civil War social event since women did not have a voice or representation in American society at the time. Specifically, women were objects of men who took care of their household. However, once the Civil War began, women started taking over the roles of men. Women fearing such solitude from societal involvement makes women advocate for fighting for equal rights as men, which results in the Seneca Falls Convention. The Seneca Falls Convention, by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, aims to share women's causes with American society. Although the Seneca Falls Convention had good intentions to help women, the American public thought otherwise, and some ridiculed the movement as inefficacious. However, that does not rule out some individuals, like Frederick Douglass, who believe in the cause of helping women. Although the Seneca Falls Convention did not make many immediate remarks about providing women freedom, it led to women continuously arguing for their rights into the 20th century, with Woodrow Wilson passing the 19th amendment (providing women the right to vote). Nonetheless, African American and Women's Rights are important social events that the Civil War instantiates.

Economic Events:

With the American Civil War, it is clear that the economic impacts were substantial, principally from funding for the war, the rise of industrial society, and the end of slavery. As the adage goes: "nothing in life is free for one always pays for something in the end." The American Civil War's Union and Confederate Army need funding to fight in the Civil War. The Union army "dominates the nation's economy, controlling most of the banking and capital of the

country" (Newman and Schmalbach 270). Furthermore, the Union army controlled "more than 85 percent of the factories, more than 70 percent of the railroads, and even 65 percent of the farmlands" (Newman and Schmalbach 270). To express differently, the Union Army had overwhelming support from the United States through industrial and agricultural power, which proved plenty for the Civil War. Meanwhile, the Confederate army relied on "European demand for [the Confederates'] cotton, [which] would bring recognition and financial aid" (Newman and Schmalbach 270). In other words, "the Confederates counted on outside help to be successful" (Newman and Schmalbach 270).

Apart from war funding, the rise of industrial society is another yet integral economic facet and another significant achievement of the American Civil War. The rise of industrial society is another significant achievement of the American Civil War for its efficiency in producing and transforming raw materials into tangible goods that makes a profit for an individual, party, or country. However, such a rise in an industrial society dehumanizes people, which Literary Realism seeks to find humanity in truth. Regarding the rise of industrial society, inventions like the Cotton Gin by Eli Whitney helped plantation owners polish cotton that became ready for production. Furthermore, textile mills converted polished cotton into cotton-based products that the United States could export and sell for profit. However, the rise of an industrial society highlights its pessimistic consequences, such as employing children to work in factories managing textile mills or employing more enslaved people to work in cotton fields due to the efficiency of the cotton gin. Supervisors of textile factories employ children because they can fit easily inside intricate machines, but children working inside intricate machines could lose limbs. Furthermore, the efficiency of the cotton gin in removing seeds and polishing the cotton means an increase in demand for cotton from an industrial vantage point. Conforming to the laws of supply and demand, as a particular product increases in demand, so will the price of the product. An increase in the product's price will motivate suppliers to distribute more. Therefore, plantation owners will employ more enslaved workers to meet the demands of allocating cotton, which motivates plantation owners as they might receive a share of profits for exporting cotton-based products.

Finally, the end of slavery also marks another inherent economic outcome as it changes the economy from the base. To introduce another economic principle, the economies of scale principle "is the theory of relationship between the scale of use of a properly chosen combination of all productive services and the rate of output of the enterprise" (Stigler 54). In other words, the output rate varies directly with some arbitrary combination of all productive services, which includes an optimal quantity of workers in the labor sector—specifically, a decrease or drop in labor results in a lower output. Ending slavery contributed to a descent in entrepreneurial productivity since plantation owners could not keep up with the demands of manufacturing industries to produce raw materials, such as cotton. However, the development of the west did lead to entrepreneurial endeavors. If the factory cannot receive more raw materials, it decreases its output to maintain equilibrium and shrinks the American economy over time. Therefore the end of slavery marks a significant economic event of the Civil War for its impact on the agricultural sector through the economies of scale principle. Outcomes from economic events during the Civil War affected how the United States operated economically. One example is the attempted change from the South for less reliance on agriculture due to a barred slavery institution. Nevertheless, funding the war, approaching an industrial society, and ending slavery were some economic events of the Civil War.

Cultural Events:

Finally, the American Civil War influenced cultural events, which impacted the Realism movement through literature, art, and music. To reiterate, the American Civil War was not a pleasant period for most people. Myriads of people during the American Civil War rejected romanticism in favor of a realist viewpoint, which is analogous to people wanting to exchange pink-hearted lenses for simple and pragmatic lenses that express the truth. Consequently, literary artists like Mark Twain criticize American religion (Christian ideologies), which represents some form of reality that the people desire. However, other literary artists like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman favor and support religion. Religion was "an important touchstone and theme" to the American Civil War as it provided comfort and peace to people experiencing anguish from the terrors of bloodshed between the Union and Confederacy (Levander

1268). Considering religious optimism, essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson explores “[finding] spirituality by turning to the self as the center of understanding” (Levander 1268). Specifically, Emerson’s first book, *Nature*, defines individuals as nothing more than vessels of the universe “that make them part of a divine as well as an earthly, finite cosmos” (Levander 1268). To broaden the scope of religion, Walt Whitman takes another perspective on how American religion should be: maintaining the integrity of an individual’s mindset. Many Americans postulate that Whitman was a prophet as his works “reject the idea that there were sharp distinctions between religion and literature or religion and science” (Levander 1269). Instead, Whitman believes his works represent his role as a prophet rather than a poet. Conversely, Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* criticizes religion by “Huck [actively rejecting] the churchgoing of adult members of his community, choosing to join Jim, a runaway slave” (Levander 1269). Furthermore, Mark Twain implies the “limitations of organized religion,” which Mark Twain also describes religion as “America’s peculiar institution” (Levander 1269). Therefore, Mark Twain’s writing denounces American religion, where he “[makes] readers laugh at religious truth” (Levander 1269). To enumerate, Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* “asserts that the power of training and education can bring a body up to believe just about anything” (Levander 1269). In other words, Mark Twain believes that religion roots in indoctrination, which can make people believe anything. In other words, religion produces hypocrisy, as one example conveys that enslavers use the Bible to justify ownership of the enslaved people.

Like literature, art is a social event during the Civil War. The art depicts realism to describe the events happening during the Civil War. Popular genres that encapsulate American Civil War art include “Genre and landscape painting [, which capture] the transformative impact of the war, not traditional history painting” (“The Civil War and American Art”). One prominent artist during the Civil War is Winslow Homer. While most men during the Civil War served for either the Union or the Confederacy (based on where they lived), Winslow Homer wanted to capture the moments that the Civil War emphasized. During the American Civil War, artists did not merely draw arbitrary shapes and objects to convey a message. Instead, artists during the American Civil War were “astute observers [with] an instinct for story and drama [with] the ability to sketch quickly and accurately” (McDonald). His works result in many testimonials praising his works for portraying the truth rather than exaggerating certain facets for influence. One testimonial by Keely Orgeman, “acting assistant curator in the Department of American Paintings and Sculpture at the art gallery,” mentions that “Homer gave people views of the war that most would never see” (McDonald).

Finally, similar to literature and art, music is a social event from the American Civil War by its apparent entertainment to help relieve pressure from the people during a time of distress. Music is truthfully literature as it is poetry but with harmony and sound. Therefore, music during the Civil War helped comfort people and strengthened bonds between people for glistening hope that outshines a negative ambiance (patriotic music). An example of music from the American Civil War includes a Union favorite song, “We Are Coming, Father Abraham,” which glorifies President Abraham Lincoln’s efforts during the Civil War, and the Confederate songs, “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” which exalts the Confederacy causes. Similar to the political outcomes of the Civil War, outcomes of cultural events during the Civil War epitomize advocacy. Examples of advocacy from cultural events include women’s rights and granting African Americans safety from discrimination, which came to be prominent during the 20th century. With women’s rights, the 1920s depict women commending suffrage by parades that ultimately caused the 19th amendment (allows suffrage without the basis of discriminating gender). Meanwhile, the Civil Rights movement during the mid-20th century depicts a promenade promising African Americans some safety from discrimination. Although African Americans receive some safety (in terms of government protection like voting and equal employment), it does not equate to avoiding discrimination as seen in the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. Nonetheless, literature, art, and music are cultural events from the Civil War.

Unique Attributes of the Civil War

Wars are commonly not exciting and pertain to two sides fighting for causes such as territorial gains or government or political issues. However, the Civil War has some attractive attributes that morph the United States from an impromptu nation of civilians figuring out the United States' identity to tailor a personality that voices everyone. Three unique attributes from the Civil War include new military technology, American culture, and expansionism. One unique attribute of the Civil War is the rise of new military technology. Examples of military technology during the Civil War include Naval Technology (like submarines and iron-clad ships) and weapons (like Gatlin guns and repeating rifles). With the rise of an industrial economy, submarines, and iron-clad ships were revolutionary for naval warfare. The Confederacy utilized submarines that broke through barriers that the Union instilled using their iron-clad ships. Gatlin guns and repeating rifles were integral and modern weapons from the industrial economy of the Civil War that influenced the violence of the Civil War, ending with extreme bloodshed—the consequences of new military technology from the Civil War resulted in people losing limbs. Regarding the Realism movement, such military technology emphasizes how people during the Civil War perceive the battle. Although military technology has negative connotations, it boasts of itself as a significant achievement from the United States during the Civil War as it transcends from muskets and slower weaponry. Another unique attribute of the Civil War is establishing the beginnings of American culture. After the Civil War, America starts maturing into what America symbolizes as a nation. America found a distinct identity from the Civil War because artists and writers like Mark Twain utilized comedy and satire to develop a realistic vantage point about the horrors of the Civil War and controversial topics like a desire to diverge from American religion. The final unique attribute of the Civil War is expansionism. Expansionism is a term that describes a nation's desire to geographically and economically expand, given proper conditions. One example of expansionism before the Civil War was Manifest Destiny which was the idea that God granted America a destiny to expand across the continent (from the Atlantic to the Pacific). However, expansionism paused once the Civil War came because of the issues of slavery. Candidly, Westward Expansion halted because people worried about the adverse effects of expanding: increasing enslaved people from the east of the Mississippi River into Louisiana, which traveled east to Texas. After the Civil War, Expansion rebooted, allowing people to explore new places, spread new ideas, and assimilate cultures. Expansionism is unique, in another way, by answering the desire to understand what the West of the United States looks like and what it is like to go on the frontier. Nevertheless, new military technology, American culture, and expansionism are unique attributes of the Civil War.

III. Values and Beliefs of the Realism Movement

Like other wars, the Civil War's violent conflict between the Union and the Confederacy influenced people in distressing ways. Such unfortunate ways made people consider realistic approaches that emphasized the mundane and ordinary life of people. Therefore, the birth of the Literary Realism movement derives from the upsetting ambiance emanating from the Civil War. As aforementioned, the Literary Realism movement emphasizes truth, accuracy, and pragmatic approaches to entertainment. People's desire for a realist perspective in the Realism movement results in rejecting the notions of romanticism. With romanticism, its intimacy "might seem to stand in sharp contrast" with "large-scale changes such as the growth of mass media and the consolidation of American national identity" (Horn and Motyl 7). Romanticism is a movement that expresses the notion of love for an individual through drama. Romanticism pertains not just to love but also pertains to a "myriad [of] issues ranging from childbirth and grief, friendship and longing, love and relationships, introspection and domesticity, to addiction and illness" (Horn and Motyl 9). Although romanticism started with social issues as aforementioned, Realism helped to transform such issues into rational thoughts. Instead of the center of the story dramatizing elements and employing imaginary situations, realism literature

utilizes “irrational acts [as] the center of their plots” (Horn and Motyl 11). Consequently, people begin to feel romanticism’s drama as “faint and awkward” (Meserve 152). The Literary Realism movement emphasizes three integral values: observation, characterization, and pragmatism.

Observation is the first fundamental value of the Literary Realism movement, as it aims to capture certain aspects of an individual’s life. Observation is an act of perceiving granular details in one’s surroundings. Thus, observation does not require drama to express a riveting story emphasizing minutiae — the small, precise, or trivial details of something (LaFlaur et al.). Therefore, observation in Literary Realism is where the author implements meticulous details of the main character and their environment to convey a rational situation that perhaps applies to the reader. Without observation, Literary Realism would resort to exaggerating particular or all aspects of a given story, which defeats the purpose of opening the reader into a pragmatic circumstance and dispatching truth. An example of observation in Literary Realism is *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton, where individuals in the story dictate observations relating to the main character, *Ethan Frome*, which conceivably represents a literary aside. The influence of observation in Literary Realism helps to add academic discussion in analyzing the characters’ intents and reveals possible nuances. Relevant to the effect of observation, the American Naturalism movement benefits from observation as it uses observation to reveal “instincts, passions, and secrets hiding in the depths of the human psyche” (Horn and Motyl 8). Therefore, observation is an integral value of the Realism movement since it emphasizes expressing atmospheric details that show deeper nuances in a story.

Characterization is the second fundamental value of the Literary Realism movement, as characters display complex, multifaceted sentiments that draw readers into the story and leave room for interpretation. Characterization is how an author develops a feeling that eventually progresses or experiences change as the character approaches the end of a story. Some may assume that characterization applies to fictional works that employ dramatic techniques to draw out the character. However, contrary to popular belief, characterization works in context to Realism as the author can mature a character through multiple temperaments from different ambiances. Accordingly, characterization is a benefactor that defines Literary Realism. Authors can produce feelings with various surfaces or perspectives through internal or external conflicts from surrounding characters and the character’s setting. The production of multiple perspectives lets audiences enjoy and relate certain qualities of characters to themselves, allowing more interpretations. Continuing the example of *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton, the main character Ethan Frome epitomizes characterization since Ms. Wharton elaborates on multiple facets of Ethan Frome, like worry, romance, anger, and more. Ms. Wharton’s utilization of characterization helps the reader develop a straightforward interpretation of the character’s purpose in the story and how nature impacts the novel’s progression. Flat characters can make a story more mundane, leaving a puzzling interpretation of the character’s purpose. However, with round characters, such as Ethan Frome, the story provides a deeper understanding of Ethan Frome’s desire for intimacy. Characterization affects future movements, such as Naturalism, by mixing multiple facets of characters that correlate to harsher political, social, and economic truths far from the scope of Realism. With Realism, most political, social, and economic realities are not strenuous to appeal to readers during the distressing times of the Civil War and its resolution. Another example of a literary work employing characterization (as aforementioned) relates to Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which Twain uses observation to answer a satirical claim about American religion. In brevity, Twain’s character, Huck, takes surface level vantage points that leaves him inept to understand the concept of religion. The characterization that Mark Twain develops with Huck helps readers relate since there perhaps is a select sample that might not believe in religion due to taking certain perspectives at face value. Nonetheless, characterization is an essential value of the Literary Realism movement as it depicts multiple facets of a character, enabling readers to seek interest and answer explanations relating to a character’s purpose in the story.

Pragmatism is the final important value in the Literary Realism movement as it aims to provide readers with a simple interpretation without surprises. Pragmatism, as a general definition, means to have a rational thought or approach to decisions in a person’s everyday life. Corresponding to pragmatism, authors desire for readers to enjoy stories without dramatization as their facades. Recalling earlier, the purpose of Literary Realism is to let audiences seek truth in literature due to the depressing outcomes of the Civil War. People did not desire to cherish the intimate

and romantic moments that encapsulate romanticism since most people could not experience happiness or joy. Therefore, Literary Realism emphasizes pragmatism since people want a realistic perspective minus exaggerations. An example of pragmatism in Literary Realism is from one figure: W.D. Howells, “a serious playwright” (Meserve 156). W.D. Howells “was opposed to sentimentality” and “to most melodrama in both fiction and plays.” As a result, W.D. Howells defines his Literary Realism works as “a truthful representation of life” (Meserve 156). To illustrate an example of Howells’ *The Campbells and the Robertes* (a play), Howells employs his plots with “Howells followed the day-to-day problems and concerns of Boston” (Meserve 157). How does employing day-to-day problems and concerns of Boston relate to W.D. Howells’ pragmatic approach to his literature? If W.D. Howells did not employ daily issues from Boston and use dramatization, it would make his play seem dubious, where some aspects of Howells’ play may not apply to the average viewer. However, when W.D. Howells employs daily problems and concerns of Boston, viewers will then lean toward the direction that Howells aims for his interpretation, which becomes simple to understand rather than intricate. Intricate interpretations involve drama and other elements in the story that prevent readers from relating to the character, setting, or the plot. Nevertheless, pragmatism is a vital value to the Literary Realism movement since it prides itself on providing audiences with unembellished analyses that hinder common understanding.

Overall, observation, characterization, and pragmatism are the three foundational values of the Literary Realism movement. Observation is when the author emphasizes precise details that describe the character and the setting. Moreover, observation allows readers to immerse themselves into the author's experience and relate to the story through the character or the setting since observations equate to reality. Then, characterization in Realism is the depth of the characters in a story through the author's development of multifaceted temperance and perspectives. Without characterization, the story becomes mundane and dull as a Literary Realism reader would not enjoy the character's inside and outside thoughts, which can affect the story's plot. Finally, pragmatism in Realism is the author's purpose in providing readers with a straightforward interpretation of the story without convoluting detailed fragments. Most literary works, especially in academia, require an analytical approach to understanding what specific excerpts mean in a given literature. Consequently, such analytical techniques leave multiple viewpoints or interpretations that may not even relate to the author's intent. Therefore, pragmatism aims to ensure readers comprehend the same understanding the author desires in his or her composition. Without observation, characterization, and pragmatism, Literary Realism would essentially become nonexistent since people during distressing times want literature to emphasize the truth and be closely realistic. Therefore, people yearn for truth and rationality since unfortunate times leave no room for much pleasure, which the Romanticism movement focuses on with its subjects about romance and intimacy.

Apart from the three values of Literary Realism, this era strikes a compelling debate between supporting American religion (Christian faith) versus opposing American religion. On one side, as aforementioned, essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson supports American religion and believes everyone has a unique school of thought pertaining to their happiness and societal beliefs. On the contrary, Mark Twain’s works belittle American religion by subtly dictating to audiences how anyone can sway to a particular philosophy or message from a major party. Therefore, such begs the question of what the nature of God is. Literary Realism answers what is the heart of God by permitting people to decide what rational evidence oscillates an individual to support American religion versus opposing American religion. Additionally, Literary Realism answers the question about human nature, specifically if humans are inherently good or evil, the definition of being a good person, and how people find true happiness. W.D. Howells believes that Literary Realism’s ideals should “allow us to ‘know one another better’” (qtd in. Horn and Motyl 8). Furthermore, W.D. Howells believes that human nature derives from knowing “the intimate ‘penetralia of the soul of man,’” which aims to “investigate how free human will” is (qtd in. Horn and Motyl 8). Investigating human volition questions to “what degree the animalistic” qualities define a person, which stresses “interpersonal” insights (Horn and Motyl 8). Simply put, a higher degree of animalistic qualities of a human perhaps makes them evil, which is the same vice versa. Moreover, the definition of a good person must mean that the person should lack animalistic qualities that make the person prefer evil over good. However, one cannot assume that good people should not have sin inside of them. Instead, good people, in a Literary Realism sense, are people who desire to undertake modest actions that benefit

society instead of acting as a detriment. The latter comes from literary authors exclaiming the distressing effects of the Civil War that highlights the appalling conditions of plantation owners towards enslaved peoples. Happiness is a feeling people experience from positive, optimistic events. Elucidating on human happiness, Literary Realism portrays human happiness through the real-world, mundane experiences of people who tackle political, social, and economic issues during the distressing times of the Civil War. Although Literary Realism literature mainly highlights negativity, partly because of the Civil War, realist authors also want to highlight positivity from a negative ambiance that inspires people with hope and faith in the future. Finally, Literary Realism answers the connections between society and the individual, where this era's consensus derives from the first of three values: observation. Remember that Literary Realism emphasizes truth and detail, which compliance defines as appending intricate details into the literature to help the reader encounter the real-world circumstances that a particular character experiences. Although Literary Realism surrounds itself with exclaiming details during a character's time through setting, it does not emphasize the portrayal of the relationship between nature and humankind. However, that does not solely exclude the fact that Literary Realism rejects acknowledging that nature and humankind relation. Instead, Literary Realism inspires that nature versus humankind connection through the naturalism movement, a derivative of Literary Realism's ideals with an emphasis on nature.

IV. Genre and Style of the Realism Movement

Literary Realism's style binds itself to authors focusing on the practical details without embellishment or dramatization. Since people during the Literary Realism era feel destitute from the effects of the Civil War, why should people desire entertainment or joy? Therefore, many people during the Civil War turned towards truthful compositions that did not resort to exaggerations or distortion. As aforementioned, the three foundational values of Literary Realism: observation, characterization, and pragmatism, consolidate the style of Literary Realism. However, about the Realism movement's style, what elements do authors employ to develop Literary Realism arrangements? When I first read *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton, I analyzed the following stylistic elements: neutral narration, comprehensive descriptions, and character development. To have neutral narration must mean that the narrator must not depict bias or favoritism towards characters. Therefore, with neutral narration, Edith Wharton makes sure that all characters do not have a pre-existing bias that hinders them from the story by negatively describing the character. The second stylistic element I found in *Ethan Frome* is comprehensive descriptions. As aforementioned, observation is an integral value of the Literary Realism movement that emphasizes granular details. In the case of *Ethan Frome*, the location of where Mr. Frome goes to college and the vivid, accurate descriptions of the winter climate near the novel's end are good examples of comprehensive descriptions. Finally, character development is another literary element in *Ethan Frome*, which relates to the second integral value of Literary Realism: characterization. As mentioned, characterization focuses on making characters express multiple facets of their personalities that relate similarly to the real world. With characterization comes round characters, contributing to the story's realistic plot that deepens readers' connections when interpreting specific composition excerpts. Without characterization, authors may develop flat characters depicting a tedious action that hampers relationships that people make with these characters, resulting in a bland composition. When briefly reading Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, another stylistic property of Literary Realism is its social commentary. Social commentary is a term that authors use to describe the historical context that the literature provides to the audience to understand the novel's setting. Some authors will explicitly mention the social commentary in literature sections, such as the prologue or, in essays, the abstract or introductory paragraphs. Other authors will implicitly mention social commentary through concrete details within the chapters of a literary work or in sections of a composition that defines the historical context throughout instead of in one place. Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* employs a setting similar to the Civil War, with one character, Jim, as an enslaved person. Social commentary is crucial to Literary Realism since the Civil War's influence must make up the foundations of how Literary Realism starts. Without Social commentary, how can authors justify why a particular character is representative of their label or why an author picks a distinct atmosphere? To recap, the style of Literary Realism derives from

exacting practical details and truth in literature, where some stylistic elements include neutral narration, comprehensive descriptions, character development, and social commentary.

Although not a comprehensive list, some genres influential in the Literary Realism movement include novels, journals and memoirs, and poetry. Novels are most prominent during the Literary Realism era as novels are enjoyable genres that people leisurely spend to gain new perspectives in astonishing ways. Consequently, novels were the first to come in Literary Realism, with “the novelist Honoré de Balzac [acting as] the chief precursor [to] realism” (Zelasko). Honoré de Balzac’s *La Comédie humaine* was one of the first novels to “attempt [creating detailed], encyclopedic portrait of the whole range of French society” (Zelasko). The attempt to develop such granular details of a society influenced famous novelists, such as “Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and George Eliot in England, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky in Russia, William Dean Howells in the United States, and Gottfried Keller and the early Thomas Mann in Germany” (Zelasko). Moving onwards, journals and memoirs are possibly popular genres during Literary Realism as Realism seeks truth, in which journals and memoirs describe a person’s experience without altercation. The very definition of the Realism movement (as repeated) is to express the truth and provide no drama to opionate the audience. Journal writers like William James do not limit themselves to fictional works. Contrary to the word Literary in Literary Realism, journals were prominent during the Realism era to introduce “new scientific fields of study, such as psychology” (Levander 1272). To expound on the subject of psychology, Williams makes a “momental, *Principles of Psychology*” that begs the question of “What is the place of religion in this new scientific field,” where the new scientific field references psychology (Levander 1272). Memoirs are useful primary sources that explicate the truth since they reminisce about the individual’s life, which prefaces in a first-person perspective, not a second or third-person perspective, leaving room for ambiguity. Finally, poetry is another genre associated with Literary Realism since authors wanted readers to enjoy simple interpretations that do not require analyzing convoluted literary semantics. To illustrate, a poet such as Stephen Crane prides himself on producing poems and short stories that do not conform to the boundaries that literature exacts, such as literary elements of hyperbole, alliteration, and more. Stephen Crane’s desire to write simple yet powerful messages in his poems and short stories derives from refuting Longfellow’s poetic style. Precisely, Stephen Crane criticizes one of Longfellow’s poems, “A Psalm of Life,” by stating that “the melodious effects of meter and rhyme [undermine]” or “impede the expressions of harsh truths or [tragedies]” (Saunders 186). Nonetheless, some critical genres of the Literary Realism movement are novels, journals and memoirs, and poetry.

V. Significant Authors and their works in the Realism Movement

Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton

To briefly summarize, *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton opens in Mr. Frome’s village, where it experiences a prolonged blizzard that ranges till the story’s resolution. The novel’s exposition introduces Ethan Frome, in his old age, reminiscent of his youthful self. Furthermore, the book progresses with intimate and perhaps erotic descriptions of the relationship between Ethan Frome and Mattie Silver, a cousin to Ethan’s Wife, Zeena Frome. She perceives such intimacy between Ethan Frome and Mattie Silver that she tries to harm their relationship by expelling Mattie Silver from Mr. Frome’s residence. However, toward the novel’s conclusion, Mr. Frome chases after Mattie Silver. Conclusively, Mattie Silver and Ethan Frome have their fairy-tale ending, resulting in a bright future.

Edith Wharton is a prolific American author whose primary audience addresses New York’s “aristocratic class. Her novel, *Ethan Frome* does not leave much room for analysis as Ms. Wharton’s works align with what realism strives for, a simple yet effective explanation. Beginning with Ethan Frome’s character, one might stipulate his flat characterism, however, there is more to Mr. Frome than meets the eye. To illustrate, chapter two of *Ethan Frome* depicts an exuberant function, “where Frome describes being alone. Being alone at a lively party must make that person feel anxious and awkward. Analogously, Ethan Frome, in chapter two, feels anxiety as he contemplates his

romantic affairs with Mattie Silver (his lover) and Zeena Frome (his wife). Correspondingly, Ethan Frome's romantic concerns leave him in a predicament: Zeena's commandeering nature. Evidence of Zeena's domineering nature is in chapter four, where Zeena often complains to Frome about matters relating to his work. The complaints that Zeena launches at Ethan Frome results in driving him in a manic state. Besides examining literary elements, Edith Wharton's writing style also leaves room for analysis as *Ethan Frome's* semantics stipulate effective sentence structure and austere vocabulary. Effective sentence structure in *Ethan Frome* comes from Edith Wharton, varying particular simple, compound, and complex sentences that make the reading fascinating. Additionally, the lexically proficient vocabulary in *Ethan Frome* shows subtleties like the transparent image of the characters. To be specific, Wharton employs warming adjectives for Mattie Silver that correlate her excellent manner while Wharton describes Zeena Frome with harsh adjectives to connect her antagonizing temperance. Finally, interpreting Edith Wharton's writing structure also justifies a reason for a straightforward, comprehensible interpretation: the need for a simple linear structure that seems deceptively straightforward. In Wharton's linear structure, the prologue and epilogue introduce a setting that takes place in a future time tangential from the setting of the main contents in *Ethan Frome*. During the prologue, Ethan Frome "reminisces about his love and youthful, energetic self," which indicates an integral literary technique, Frame Narrative. Continuing from the prologue, the first two chapters of *Ethan Frome* continue introducing Ethan Frome, Zeena Frome, and Mattie Silver, where the story progresses by explicating simple literary elements such as describing the conflict, encountering the climax, and approaching the resolution. Overall, Edith Wharton's characterization, writing style, and writing structure all contribute to the Literary Realism movement through her theme about romance in a realistic manner that dictates the actuality of a relationship, which reminisces the past Romanticism movement.

"In the Desert" and "Behold the Grave of a Wicked Man" by Stephen Crane

Stephen Crane is "one of America's foremost realistic writers," whose works are mainly short stories and poems ("Stephen Crane"). To summarize his poem "In the Desert," the poem starts in a vaguely-described desert that dispatches a peculiar interaction between the narrator and the creature. Furthermore, the narrator observes the arid environment while noticing a strange enigma, the creature. The creature consumes the heart in the desert, which leaves the narrator to enquire if the heart tastes good. The creature responds to the narrator's question and mentions that the heart tastes bitter but acceptable. Meanwhile, "Behold the Grave of a Wicked Man" starts with a fierce spirit who instructs the lady not to give flowers to a man's grave. The woman responds by stating that she loves the man; however, the spirit insists that she should not provide the flowers. At the poem's end, Stephen Crane mentions why the woman continues weeping if the spirit was not aggravating or, at the very least, calm and stern.

Analyzing Stephen Crane's first poem, "In the Desert," the setting represents an empty void, which perhaps represents "the author's mind." The narrator perceives "a creature, naked, [and] bestial," where the creature's nakedness constitutes physical vulnerability (Crane, "In the Desert"). Physical vulnerability from the creature alludes to a biblical reference in the first book of Moses (Genesis), specifically chapter three, that mentions the consumption of eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge. Although God explicitly told Adam and Eve not to consume the fruit, God never said that they could not look at the fruit (*The Orthodox Study Bible*, Gen. 3.3). Therefore, the devil, zoomorphized as the serpent, exploits such technicality, where he tempts Eve to look at the fruit and assure her that she will become omniscient like God, discerning good versus evil (*The Orthodox Study Bible*, Gen. 3.4-5). However, Eve and Adam's temptation made God furious as they knew their nakedness, indicating physical vulnerability (*The Orthodox Study Bible*, Gen. 3.9-13). Furthermore, analyzing the literary elements in the poem, such as alliteration, suggests a staid and sorrowful mood that makes the reader feel sympathy for the creature. The creature, who holds his heart in his hands represents the once lively heart the creature retains from his or her's past. However, due to some encounters, the creature experienced, the heart no longer retains that energy primarily from a lack of interest.

Meanwhile, in Stephen Crane's "Behold the Grave of a Wicked Man," the poem highlights a complex and profound meaning reflecting social norms. Analyzing the tone of "Behold the Grave of a Wicked Man," implies candid

messages that Stephen Crane shares without exaggeration, although the poem emanates a slightly negative tone. Additionally, analyzing why the spirit forbids the woman from giving flowers to a dead man implies two labels that the man possesses: a deceiver or a criminal. If the spirit implies that the man is a deceiver, then it infers that the woman's desire to give flowers to the dead man's grave indicates a former partner, who perhaps was in an unstable relationship. Another theory that the spirit implies is if the man is a criminal, where the criminal does not want the woman to be near the man for the transgressions that outweigh the obedience. Maybe the man harmed society severely and left the spirit above vexed, which the poem's title supports.

Considering both analyses of Stephen Crane's poems, Stephen Crane's themes are negative and straightforward, which supports Literary Realism. Reminiscing back on the sentiments of people during the Realism movement, people did not desire joy or contentment since most people, during the Civil War, were in distressing situations that left no room to feel happiness or leisurely spend time reading and comprehending jovial works. Instead, people wanted truth and rationality. Literary novelists, essayists, poets, and other professionals listened to the developing works in the scope of reality with negative moods and tones because of the depressing environment that the Civil War constructed. When comparing "In the Desert" with "Behold, the Grave of a Wicked Man," it seems that "In the Desert" depicts a particular mystery about who the creature is. One could speculate that the creature is the author's emotional self, where Mr. Crane's emotional self-consumes the remaining enthusiasm before an arbitrary event that changes the author's emotional self. Analogously, the author's emotional self-corresponds to the movie *Inside Out*'s primary character, Joy. *Inside Out* is a Disney movie that takes the perspective of Riley's (the main character) mind. Joy, the emotional custodian to Riley, controls an intricate system of memories that categorize into feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, and fear. Overall, Stephen Crane's works express the Realism movement through its pessimistic themes about the apathy that symbolizes a by-product of this era.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

To reference another summary of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*:

Mark Twain's classic *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) is told from the point of view of Huck Finn, a barely literate teen who fakes his own death to escape his abusive, drunken father. He encounters a runaway slave named Jim, and the two embark on a raft journey down the Mississippi River. Through satire, Twain skewers the somewhat unusual definitions of "right" and "wrong" in the antebellum (pre-Civil War) South, noting among other things that the "right" thing to do when a slave runs away is to turn him in, not help him escape. Twain also paints a rich portrait of the slave Jim, a character unequaled in American literature: he is guileless, rebellious, genuine, superstitious, warmhearted, ignorant, and astute all at the same time. ("The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" 55).

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, or best known through his pen name as Mark Twain, was an "American humorist, journalist, lecturer, and novelist who acquired international fame for his travel narratives" (Quirk). As mentioned in the historical context, Mark Twain's writing is satirical and perhaps controversial to most people during the Realism movement. The feedback from his works "did not always translate to favorable reviews from critics who questioned the truth literary merits of his "humorous" works" ("*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*" 65). Unfavorable reviews are justifiably negative since the summary of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* talks about the controversial topic of slavery with gory descriptions of the day-to-day life of an indentured servant. However, that begs the question of whether people really desired controversial topics since people during the Literary Realism era wanted truth and rationality. If so, are not literary reviews and critics hypocritical (assuming the reviewers and critics are from the Literary Realism era)? However, some "literary scholars praise *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*" since it is a "morally complex" creation ("*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*" 66). When analyzing the complexity of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, one may stray away from the novel due to its perplexing structure and length. Such a perplexing

structure comes from briefly reading a portion of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, where the depth of the vocabulary makes it resistant to proper understanding. Additionally, the novel's length makes it difficult for anyone to say that the book is easy to fly through, resulting in a reader properly analyzing and trying to comprehend it. An additional interpretation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* indicates social commentary pertaining importantly to the Literary Realism movement as people want the truth, which is the goal of social commentary. One evocative scene in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* describes "Huck's dilemma when trying to help Jim," but results in "Pap ranting at Huck" for "allowing [an African American man] to vote" ("The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" 69). Such an evocative scene depicts an analogous situation that Frederick Douglass experienced when Sophia Auld's husband dissuaded her from teaching little Douglass the alphabet. All in all, Mark Twain's work is compelling and representative of the Literary Realism movement due to his compositions' built-in social commentary highlighting the harsh truths of the Civil War and reality.

Non-fiction works of Sutton Griggs

Leveraging the focus from literature, Sutton Griggs is the first example of non-fiction works that the Literary Realism movement possesses. Sutton Griggs was an "African American minister and novelist," who receives credit for writing non-fiction prose that draws on "his position of religious prominence to garner the attention of readers" (Levander 1270). Some examples of non-fiction prose that Sutton Griggs wrote include "The Race Question in a New Light (1909)", "Wisdom's Call (1910)", and "Beyond the End (1911)" (Levander 1270), which utilizes his "preaching style" when he was a "pastor of the First Baptist Church and the Tabernacle Baptist Church" (Levander 1270). Sutton Griggs' works relate to the Literary Realism movement through his profession as a preacher that sermonizes the "racial injustices of post-Reconstruction America" (Levander 1270). Remember how social commentary was a stylistic technique advertised by the Literary Realism movement? In Sutton Griggs' non-fiction prose, he adds that stylistic technique to emphasize the struggle of Black Americans in the American slave institution. Additionally, analyzing the three non-fiction proeses from Sutton Griggs shows influential rhetorical parameters that help persuade readers to listen closely and comprehend Mr. Griggs' notions. When briefly analyzing Sutton Griggs' "Imperium in Imperio," one potent rhetorical device found is an allusion, in which he uses a biblical allusion that references David and Goliath. He compares David and Goliath's story to the struggle of African Americans and their fight against racism and slavery, where David is an African American. At the same time, the Goliath is the government who enacts and institutes racism and slavery. Another example of a powerful rhetorical device that Sutton Griggs uses is repetition. In Sutton Griggs' "The American Negro," he repeats "he is not free" to dictate that African Americans do not have liberty or rights like all other men, emphasizing immediacy for African-American independence. Nonetheless, Sutton Griggs' works also represent the Literary Realism movement since his non-fictional prose applies social commentary to indicate the harsh struggles of African Americans and uses rhetorical devices to repeat and emphasize those harsh truths to his audience without over-amplifying specific assertions.

Non-fiction works of William James

William James, "brother of the famous American writer, Henry James," is the final significant author of the Literary Realism movement through his non-fiction works, where he explains the concepts of psychology and religion during this era (Levander 1272). To explain such subjects, William James must employ more, if not some, rhetorical devices that appeal to the audience and inform them effectively. In retrospect to the study of psychology, his monumental *Principles of Psychology* asks questions of how religion plays in the role of psychology (Levander 1272). Such questions come from his writings and lectures at Harvard University, where he coined terms like "stream of consciousness" (Levander 1272). Briefly reading "The Stream of Thought," the previously mentioned term comes from an anecdote, a rhetorical device discussing the speaker's experiences. William James employs an anecdote about a boy who catches a fish, resulting in the concept of specious presence—a person's perceptions become a reality or in the present (James

609). Ultimately, the coined term "stream of consciousness," influenced modernist writers that ultimately became "one of the defining traits of modernist literary technique" (Levander 1273). In retrospect to the study of religion, "James addresses the roles of religion" in his works, *The Will to Believe* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, where he ponders about how God's existence originates from "what belief in God brings to a person's life" (Levander 1273). Such curiosity, correlating with his research in the realm of psychology, synthesizes how "psychologists should study intense, even pathological, religious mentalities [since] they highlight mental processes" (Levander 1273). How do the studies of psychology and religion relate to the Literary Realism movement? As people during this era garnered interest in accuracy and truth, people also wanted to explore different vantage points that targeted particular topics, such as psychology and religion. In the 19th century, information was not primarily centralized or prominent. Therefore, William James seized the opportunity to write subjects about psychology and religion to meet people's curiosities during the Literary Realism movement. Although William James' work may not seem too crucial for the Realism movement, his impact through his non-fiction works, like essays and other prose, highlights the facet of craving education that people desire.

VI. Conclusion

In summation, the historical context and values are where Literary Realism's principles derive, and its genre and style impact significant authors. Literary Realism's historical context primarily derives from the Civil War and its effect.

The leading causes of the Civil War include:

- slavery,
- Frederick Douglass' role in the anti-slavery movement, and
- the violent circumstances of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Consequently, the Civil War impacts four categories of events (political, social, economic, and cultural):

- political events focusing on Abraham Lincoln's Election, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the Reconstruction Era;
- social events concentrating on African American and Women's rights;
- economic events focusing on funding the war, moving towards an industrial society, and ending slavery; and
- cultural events concentrating on literature, music, and art.

Then, the three values and beliefs of the Literary Realism movement are observation, characterization, and pragmatism, which define and answer questions concerning debates between supporting American religion and opposing it, the nature of humans, and societal versus individual relationships. Subsequently, the style of Literary Realism focuses on four crucial elements: neutral narration, comprehensive descriptions, character development, and social commentary. Moreover, the associated genres of this era include novels, journals and memoirs, and poetry. Finally, five significant authors (three with literary works and two with non-fiction works) impacting Literary Realism include:

- Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, which highlights the harsh truths of romance,
- Stephen Crane's two poems, "In the Desert" and "Behold the Grave of a Wicked Man," which indicates a deeper nuance about human apathy,
- Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which depicts social commentary about slavery in the Civil War,
- Sutton Griggs' non-fictional works, which his works delineate the desires for African-American freedom, and
- William James' non-fictional works, which his works explicate the educational desire to learn religion and psychology.

Ultimately, Literary Realism influences movements like the Modernist and Naturalist movements, in which the interest in rationality opens myriad possibilities about truth and rationality. In other words, the desire for rationality and truth creates a new sub-genre of literature that triumphs in directness rather than indirectness through convoluted literary elements that hinder universal understanding. Although not an exhaustive list, two significant international figures of the Realism movement include Honoré de Balzac and Charles Dickens (Zanigor 190). “The period of Victorian literature, [considers] to be a positive period in [England’s history, where it] is a complex phenomenon of Christian culture, primarily concerned with politics and philosophy” (Zanigor 190). Therefore, the importance of Charles Dickens as an international figure to Literary Realism is to reflect the concern of Victorian politics and philosophy in his works, such as *Oliver Twist*, which impacts American Realism (Zanigor 190). Moreover, Honoré de Balzac’s purpose as an international figure in the Realism era is to express the “development of action” and “objective reality of the fate of one or another hero,” which astonishes the reader with “vigilant logic” (Zanigor 190). Literary Realism has two definitions: a movement that takes a tedious approach to everyday life and a movement that depicts pragmatic advice to a reader.

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