

Naturalistic

Theatre

Facts about fourth wall: use in Naturalist theatre:

...speak as though they were at home. Antoine is normally credited with being the first to require an actor to turn his back on the audience; from this style of acting arose the concept of the “fourth wall” separating the stage from the audience. Behind this “wall”—invisible to the audience, opaque to the actors—the environment portrayed was to be as authentic...

Realism

VS

Naturalism

REALISM:

- ✓ an attempt to describe human behavior and surroundings or to represent figures and objects **exactly** as they act or appear in life.
- ✓ began in the mid-19th century, in reaction to the highly subjective approach of romanticism.
- ✓ In general, the work of these writers illustrates the main tenet of realism, which writers must not select facts in accord with preconceived aesthetic or ethical ideals but must set down their observations **impartially and objectively**.
- ✓ Concerned with the faithful representation of life, which frequently lacks form, the realists tended to **downplay plot in favor of character** and to concentrate on **middle-class** life and preoccupations, avoiding larger, more dramatic issues.

References:

http://209.85.135.132/search?q=cache:uwo2b2MZ6xoJ:archbishopspalding.org/published/mauroj/dat/juniors_realism_vs_naturalism_ditto.doc+naturalism+versus+realism&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk &
<http://www.britannica.com/facts/5/464066/fourth-wall-as-discussed-in-theatre-building> &
<http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz186021154d260.html>

NATURALISM (an extreme form of realism)

- ✓ the theory that literary composition should be based on an objective, empirical presentation of human beings. It differs from realism in adding an **amoral attitude** to the objective presentation of life.
- ✓ Naturalistic writers regard human behavior as controlled by instinct, emotion, or social and economic conditions, and **reject free will**, adopting instead, in large measure, the biological determinism of Charles Darwin and the economic **determinism** of Karl Marx.
- ✓ **Determinism**: In Naturalism, characters do not have free will; external and internal forces, environment, or heredity control their behavior. This belief is called determinism. All determinists believe in the existence of the will, but the will is often enslaved on account of different reasons.

Subject Matter & Characterization in Naturalistic Fiction

Donald Pizer further suggests specific changes in subject matter and characterization which help in defining Naturalism as different from Realism:

1. The subject matter:

- a. The subject matter deals with those raw and unpleasant experiences which reduce characters to "degrading" behavior in their **struggle to survive**.
- b. These characters are mostly from the lower middle or the lower classes - they are poor, uneducated, and unsophisticated.
- c. The milieu is the commonplace and the unheroic; life is usually the dull round of daily existence. But the naturalist discovers those qualities in such characters usually associated with the heroic or adventurous - acts of violence and passion leading to desperate moments and violent death. The suggestion is that life on its lowest levels is not so simple as it seems to be.
- c. There is discussion of fate and "hubris" that affect a character; generally the controlling force is society and the surrounding environment.

References:

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2. The concept of a naturalistic character:

a. characters are conditioned and controlled by environment, heredity, chance, or instinct; but they have compensating humanistic values which affirm their individuality and life - their struggle for life becomes heroic and they maintain human dignity.

b. the Naturalists attempt to represent the intermingling in life of the controlling forces and individual worth. They do not dehumanize their characters.

"The primary goal of the late nineteenth-century American Naturalists was not to demonstrate the overwhelming and oppressive reality of the ***material forces*** present in our lives. Their attempt, rather, was to represent the intermingling in life of controlling forces and individual worth. The Naturalists do not dehumanize man." - Pizer

If a play about fishermen was being produced by die-hard Naturalists, which of the following would most likely be used in the production?

- a barrel of real fish
- puppets of ocean life
- backdrop of a boat painted in perspective
- recorded sounds of ocean waves

References:

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