**International Journal of Literature Studies**
ISSN: 2754-2610
DOI: 10.32996/ijts
Journal Homepage: www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijls

IJLS
AL-KINDI CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# The Genteel Realist James as a Pessimistic Naturalist in *The Princess Casamassima*

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**| ABSTRACT**
This paper highlights James as a naturalistic pessimist in his late fiction and, more specifically, in his late novel *The Princess Casamassima* (1986). Although James was identified as a pioneer genteel idealistic realist in his early fiction, his mode of writing shifted in his late fiction to cope with the new environmental settings in Europe and post-civil war American conditions. This dynamic change in his writing modes renders James as an experimental writer responsive to the drastic social, economic and intellectual changes in the late nineteenth century. To fictionalize the historical changes that occurred in Europe, James inscribes in *The Princess Casamassima* the harsh reality of life as it is, without idealization and aestheticization. He fictionalizes Hyacinth as drawn into the secret world of revolutionary politics and projects him as helpless and determined by biological, social, political and environmental forces which he can neither understand nor control. In dealing with themes of the lower order of society, violence, suicide, revolutionary politics, as well as social contrasts and environmental determinism not attempted at all in his early fiction, we witness in *The Princess Casamassima* a new naturalistic pessimist James. Delineating Hyacinth as strikingly determined, immersed in grim settings, together with being victimized by fate, the paper concludes, renders James a typical naturalist.

**| KEYWORDS**

Biological determinism, Environmental determinism, Princess Casamassima, Post-Civil War America, Writing modes, Naturalism, Realism, James.

**| ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**ACCEPTED:** 01 February 2023 **PUBLISHED:** 09 February 2023 **DOI:** 10.32996/ijts.2023.3.1.2

## 1. Introduction

Both realism and naturalism emerged in an era of turmoil in nineteenth-century America, and to some extent, they gained their meaning from specific historical influences of the period. After the Civil War, America had undergone traumatic social, economic, moral and political changes, and the realists and naturalists came thereafter to use fiction to reflect these changes and even to interpret the effects on people of these various kinds of changes. Realism and naturalism portray similar textures of life and human experience which are drawn from the various kinds of change that occurred in America after the Civil War. However, realism and naturalism fictionalize these textures in different ways of selection, different degrees of emphasis, and different narrative strategies of representation. As Sydney Krause (1964), Lee Clark Mitchell (1989), Donald Pizer (1984), Eric Sundquist (1982), and Richard chase (1957)[1] emphasize, realism is different formally from naturalistic representation in the sense that realists tend to use a balanced language and common life-like dialogue. Naturalists, on the other hand, tend to focus on broken syntax and linguistic repetition to imply scenic repetition. As Mitchell suggests, in *Determined Fictions (1989)*, to immense readers in a determined universe the naturalists rely on repetition—of scenes, of characters, of syntactic patterns, even of words and sounds—whose culminating effect is to deny "the possibility of either coherent identity or progressive behavior" (22). Apparently, despite approaching similar

1 The sources of these authors in order are: Essays on Determinism in American Literature (Kent: Kent State UP, 1964); Determined Fictions: American Literary Naturalism (NY: Columbia UP, 1989); Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1984); American Realism: New Essays (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1982); and The American Novel and Its Tradition (NY: Doubleday, 1957).

historical conditions, both modes are different in significant ways in matters of thematic and formal representation. Although the realists and naturalists dealt with similar themes, such as the effect of modern city and industrialization on characters, and similar textures of life and human experience; realism and naturalism fictionalize these textures in different ways of selection, different degrees of emphasis, and different narrative strategies of representation. Realists dealt with themes moderately and sometimes in a symbolic way that did not offend the nineteenth-century American reader's Victorian morality. Further, the realists and naturalists dealt differently with matters of narrative conceptions (i.e., plot, setting, and linguistic repetition). Realists tend to project in their fiction a moral idealistic world; with an emphasis on the bright side of life as William Dean Howells, for instance, fictionalizes in *A Modern Instance* (1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1895) some of the post-Civil-War change, but in moderation. Howells lets an idealistic moral world prevail at the end of The *Rise of Silas Lapham* when he makes Silas give up his capital to his creditors to gain a moral rise. We do not see Silas killing for money or flattering women, and although Bartely Hubbard is selfish, we do not see him playing with women to satisfy an uncontrolled sexual desire or exploiting people to gain money illegally. If realism tends to select the moderate and the common idealistic experience, naturalism tends to select what Frank Norris calls "the sensational," "the irrational," "the brutal," and the "primitive." In the later mode of writing, we witness crime and butchering (Norris's *The Octopus* (1901)), deception and moral corruption (Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) and Stephen Crane's *Maggie* (1893)), violence (Crane's *Sister Carrie,* "The Monster" and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)) and other human emotions of greed, hatred, and jealousy which result from the materialistic competition between individuals.

The realistic writings then are more idealistic than the naturalistic writings because they represent what the characters should do rather than what they actually do in life. Naturalistic characters, on the other hand, are, as Pizer asserts in *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth Century American Literature* (1984), uncertain and disillusioned (8). Further, realistic narrative plots, unlike those of the naturalist, are hardly sensational, for most realists try to duplicate the moderate, ideal, and representative life. They choose autonomous characters with free will, and their plots exclude the grim themes of the naturalists (Qtd. Pizer, 1984, 8).

There is much interest at present in the nature of James's fiction, especially centered on his exploration of a variety of modes of writing in his fiction. Although James is classified by most critics as a typical realist, this paper asserts that James in the later phase of his fiction after 1886 incorporated naturalistic themes in his novels that reflect the hard times of America after the Civil War. The paper explores such themes in his *novel The Princess Casamassima* (1886) which is considered a masterpiece in the late phase of his fiction. Like Philip Glover in *Henry James and the French Novel: A Study of interpretation* (1972), Sergio Perosa (*Henry James and the Experimental Novel* 1987), as well as Lyall Powers in *Henry James and the Naturalist Movement* (1971), I explore James as a naturalist in his novel, but my approach to James's naturalism is different. I don't claim James to be a "full-fledged scientific naturalist" as Perosa does; rather, I view him as a realist whose awareness of the hard times in late nineteenth-century America and Europe urged him to document the harsh reality without idealization and thus to give to his fiction some naturalistic themes (i.e. sensationalism, violence, suicide, poverty, degrading settings) and to use naturalistic techniques (i.e. taking notes and documentation). Further, unlike critics like Glover and Powers, I relate the naturalistic shades in his late novel more to historical causes (i.e., the Civil War and its consequences, industrialization, and materialism) and less to purely literary aesthetic influences like those of the American and French naturalists. Further, the ideas developed in this paper about naturalistic elements in The *Princess Casamassima* stem from a close reading of the novel itself rather than from any presumption of outside literary and aesthetic influences. I draw on historical definitions of naturalism as a literary term and on contemporary critical discussions to assist me to study the naturalistic representation in the novel.

*Princess Casamassima* advertises the vulgarity of post-Civil War America using a naturalistic mode of writing. It adds a more comprehensive picture to the panorama of the vulgarity and commercialism of the age. Unlike James's *The Bostonians (1986)* which combines both realistic and naturalistic modes of writing to reflect the women's movement. The paraphernalia of The *Princess Casamassima* is very close to the naturalists' themes and techniques of representation. *Princess Casamassima* started to appear in the *Atlantic magazine* just a few months after *The Bostonians* had begun to appear in *The Century*. Both novels were published in 1886. Like *The Bostonians*, *Princess Casamassima* is concerned with a reform movement, but in a more serious and daring way. James uses in *The Princess Casamassima* naturalistic themes and techniques more intensely. His characters in the novel are determined by heredity and poverty, and the naturalistic plot of decline, the degrading material, and the documentary and journalistic note-taking technique in the novel put James on equal footing with the late nineteenth-century American realists who came to use naturalistic realism to describe hard times in America in the late nineties. To describe the anarchic life in London frankly and objectively James has to shift from his early idealistic mode of realism to the naturalistic mode which best serves his purposes in inscribing the degrading, violent, and sensational reality. In applying this mode, James's representation comes to be similar to that of Emile Zola and other late nineteenth-century American naturalists.

Just as social, economic, and political conditions of life were changing in America after the Civil War, so were they in England, France, and Europe in general. Both sides of the Atlantic had undergone serious changes in life as a result of the move from a simple agrarian life to a troubled urban world. London, in particular—the setting of James's *The Princess Casamassima*—became

the city of chimneys, slums, violence, crime, and hunger—what James calls "sighs of unspeakable misery." It witnessed several political upheavals in the 1890s for the difficult times that people came to face in their social and economic life. The poverty and the insecure social position of human beings in an almost Darwinian world of competition made them live in a state of unrest and uncertainty. They came to experience similar conditions to those that existed in America after the Civil War. Richard Lehan in "The European Background," explains that the English riots, the French Revolution, and the American Civil War are "all expressions of . . . [the] historical moment [of industrialism and urbanism]," and that "despite differences in time," they "mark breaks with the feudal and aristocratic past" (47). The Haymarket tragedy in Chicago in 1886 has parallels also in England, namely, the Trafalgar Square riots in London, which also occurred in the very year of the novel's publication. In 1886, London came to suffer economic hard times that pushed the people to revolt against the unjust system of living. London became famous for its poverty-stricken slums, and the poor spread all over its streets seeking shelter and jobs. Several English writers came to portray life in England frankly, as James does in *The Princess Casamassima*, and in doing so, their novels came to incorporate a naturalistic shade to such an extent that several critics such as Lars Ahnerbrink called them naturalists. Examples of those English naturalists and their typical naturalistic works are Arthur Morrison's *A Child of the Jago in Mean Streets* (1894), Richard Whileing's *No. 5 John Street (1899);* George Gissing's *The Unclassed* (1884) and *The Nether World* (1889); and George Moore's *A Mummer's Wife* (1885) and *Esther Waters* (1894). Naturalism in England, as several critics assert, was less adopted than in America and France because of the strong Victorian traditions which James also experienced. Therefore, the naturalism of the English writers is more moderate than that of the French naturalists such as Zola and Gustave Flaubert. For example, many of the English novels mentioned before portray dismal slum settings populated by poor lower classes who can hardly survive in such an age of hunger and deprivation. Those novels incorporate environmental determinism. Moore's *A Mummer'sWife* (1885) carries, for instance, the significant epigraph: "change the surroundings in which man lives, and, in two or three generations, you'll have changed his physical constitution, his habits of life, and . . . his ideas."[2] James's naturalism is very close to that of those English naturalists, because, like them, he softened the effects of Zolaesque naturalism by a moderate portrayal that is in accord with the Victorian standards of life that James absorbed and that came to affect his themes and representation.

While living in London, James observed the same degrading conditions of life that English naturalists noticed and inscribed in their novels. His letters during that period testify that he was aware of the threats of uprisings in the social order. Further, as Lionel Trilling asserts in *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), James came to inscribe this threatening status quo and the political upheavals of London in his *The Princess Casamassima,* especially the revolutionary spirit which occupied the people at that time (70-2).[3]

In preparation for writing the novel, James moved in the streets of London with a pen and a note-book in hand, exactly like the naturalists, taking notes and storing observations and impressions. For instance, in a letter of 1884 to T. S. Perry, James tells of one of his visits to Millbank prison to collect notes for the scene when Hyacinth visits his mother in Newgate prison, and he concludes the letter, "you see I am quite the naturalist" (Qtd. in Powers 1971, 94). In *The Princess Casamassima,* James gives a factual picture of the environment of London: the streets of Cheapside and Camberwell, the river of dockside, the Crookenden's bindery, the pubs and other settings. He took advantage of every spot of London as he writes in his "Preface" to the novel:

> I have endeavored to characterize the peremptory fashion in which my fresh experience of London—the London of the habitual observer, the preoccupied painter, the pedestrian prowler—reminded me; an admonition that represented, I think, the sum of my investigations. I recall pulling no wires, knocking at no closed doors, and applying for no "authentic" information; but I recall also on the other hand the practice of never missing an opportunity to add a drop, however small, the bucket of my impressions . . . . To haunt the great city [of London] and by this habit to penetrate it, imaginatively, in as many places as possible—that was to be informed, that was to pull wires, that was to open doors, that positively was to groan at times under the weight of one's accumulations . . . . I recollect feeling, in short, that I might well be ashamed if, with my advantages—and there wasn't a street, a corner, an hour, of London that was not an advantage. I shouldn't be able to piece together a proper semblance of all the odd parts of his [Hyacinth's] life. My notes, then, on the much-mixed world of my hero's both overt and covert consciousness, were exactly my gathered impressions and stirred perceptions, the deposit in my *working imagination* [emphasis added] of all my visual and all my constructive sense of London. The very plan of my book [*The Princess Casamassima*] had in fact directly confronted me with the rich principle of the *Note* [emphasis added] and was to do much to clear up,

[2] Ahnebrink discusses this English naturalism in detail in chapter three ['Aspects of European Realistic and Naturalistic Literature in America prior to 1990'] in his book *The Beginnings of Naturalism in American fiction* (1961), 21-34.

[3] As James was puzzled by the Feminist movement in Bostonian society and thus wrote *The Bostonians*, he questions in *The Princess Casamassima* political and social realities in the London society via an imagination which he calls "the imagination of disaster." Robert Weinmmann, 2007. Lionel Trilling explains James's ferocious view of London society in particular, and Europe in general: he emphasizes that *The Princess Casamassima* "has at its very center the assumption that Europe has reached the fullness of its ripeness and it's passing over into rottenness . . . that it may meet its ends by the violence and this is not wholly unjust" Qtd. in Weimann 2007.

> once and for all, my political view of it. If one was to undertake to tell tales and to report with truth on the human secret, it could be but because of "notes." (21-2)

Henry James asserts the value of imagination in his composition of the novel. He is not a passive scientific observer but applies his imagination to his data (i.e., observations) to come up with a fiction that is close to the real. His observations are the "deposit of his working imagination," rather than the data to prove a scientific theory or whim. The notes are the inevitable ingredients of his novel or, in his own words, "the prime result of all fresh experience" (Ibid, 22).

James's observations and impressions of London, its streets and people, created for him the idea of the novel. This idea of the novel came to him as a result of his habit of strolling the streets of London: the idea, specifically, of some small and obscure but intelligent creature, whose troubled identity, economic suffering, and political concerns, together with the destructive influence of the people around him make his life a sacrifice. Of his observations in London which form the core of his story, James writes in his "Preface" to *The Princess Casamassima:*

> The simplest account of the origin of *The Princess* Casamassima is, I think, that this fiction proceeded quite directly, during the first year of a long residence in London, from the habit of the interest of walking the streets. I walked a great deal—for exercise, for amusement, for acquisition . . . and as to do this was to receive many impressions, so the impressions worked and sought an issue, so the book after a time was born. (Ibid, 7)

Hyacinth Robinson, James writes, "Sprang up for me out of the London pavement." And of his impressions and observations about the nature of Hyacinth's character, his troubled self, despair, and, in general, his fate, James also writes in the "Preface":

> There was a moment at any rate when they [his observations] offered me an image more vivid than that of some individual sensitive nature of fine mind, some small obscure intelligent creature whose education should have been almost wholly derived from them, capable of profiting by all the civilization, all the accumulations to which they testify, yet condemned to see things only from outside—in mere quickened consideration, mere wistfulness and envy and despair. It seemed to me I had only to imagine such a spirit intent enough and troubled enough and to place it in the presence of the comings and goings, the great gregarious company, of the more fortunate than himself—all on the scale on which London could show them. I arrived so at the history of little English Hyacinth Robinson. (Ibid, 8)

The simple and abstract history of Hyacinth—the plot of the novel—can be summarized like this: Hyacinth is an illegitimate son of a French working-girl and of an English aristocrat. He is reared by a dressmaker, Amanda Pynsent. This dressmaker had lived for fourteen years in Lomax place in London, and Florentine Virvin, Hyacinth's mother, used to be her friend. When Florentine kills Hyacinth's father and is sentenced to spend her life in prison, Pynsent comes to Vervin at the prison and promises her to take care of the child and rescue it from, to use James's words, "the fate that had swallowed the mother." When a child, Hyacinth is told that his mother had died many years ago and that she was a great invalid. Hyacinth is brought up by Pynsent like a gentleman and is raised to believe that though he lives in Cockney London he has the best English blood in his veins. His character, as James shows us throughout the novel, seems to be divided and troubled because of his divided hereditary origins; he seems to attest both to the aristocratic blood of his father and to the French "vulgar" blood of his good mother. He has the tastes of both aristocracy and vulgarity. When introduced to a group of revolutionary communists, Hyacinth pledges to do whatever they may require from him in the name of the revolution. At the same time, Hyacinth finds himself attached to aristocracy (whose seeds he already has from the father) by meeting Princes Casamassima, who is also associated with the anarchist movement. The troubled identity of Hyacinth puts his interests in conflict. He is torn between his love for the artistic and aristocratic, and his sympathy with the vulgar and common people—a matter which leads him finally to despair and to commit suicide.

Like James, Hyacinth is an acute observer of life, and like him, he is accustomed to taking long walks. His impressions are accumulated about the poor and the common people via his observations of them. He comes to sympathize with them. As James tells us, he is a curious person who enjoyed walking alone for mapping the environment of London and its people:

> Though he was poor and obscure and ramped and full of unattainable desires, nothing in life had such an interest and such a price as his impressions and reflections. They came from everything he touched, they made him vibrate, and kept him thrilled and throbbing, for most of his walking consciousness they constituted as yet the principal events and stages of his career. Fortunately, they were often an immense amusement. Everything in the field of observations

> suggested this or that; everything stuck him, penetrated him, stirred; he had in a word more news of life (James *The Princess Casamassima 26*-7)[4].

James makes Hyacinth watch the same scenes he documented while strolling the streets of London. Hyacinth observes the poor and the rich, and the aristocratic and the vulgar life. His sympathies, like James's own, came to be divided between the aristocratic rich and the vulgar poor. If the early realist and aristocratic James who wrote only of aristocrats is now watching the vulgarity of London and is concerned about it to a degree that pushes him to take notes of it for writing a novel, Hyacinth also observes the experiences of the vulgar life but as a poor and deprived person. He becomes a part of the vulgarity of London and keeps a distance from the corrupted aristocratic world where the making of money operates. In this world of the rich, Hyacinth can find no place. James states in his "Preface":

> To find his possible adventure interesting, I had only to conceive his watching the same public show, the same innumerable appearances. I had watched myself, and of his watching very much as I had watched; save indeed for one little difference. This difference would be that so far as all the swarming facts should speak of freedom and ease, knowledge and power, money, opportunity and society; he should be able to revolve round them but at the most respectful of distances and with every door of approach shut in his face. (James, "Preface," 8)

In addition to the poverty, disappointment, and deprivation which Hyacinth experiences in life, what further complicates and increases his despair and loss is basically his heredity origins. James dedicates several pages of the novel defining them as a force of destruction in him. In doing so, James implicates the naturalistic dimension, namely, biological determinism, as a force operating on poor and helpless characters in the typical naturalistic novel. As Pizer writes in *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (1984), the naturalists give great attention to the role of "casual forces as heredity and environment in determining" the behavior of their characters. To start with his representation of characters, James chooses low-born characters for his novel, who, like most naturalistic figures, suffer from hunger and the degradation of life. Hyacinth and most of the characters in the novel are presented as belonging to the low-working class; they are poor and determined. Hyacinth, for instance, is portrayed as a bastard in a very degrading environment. He is raised in a semi-slum place in Lomax place. When a child, Hyacinth was "playing in the gutters . . . . He's a thin-skinned, morbid, mooning, introspective little bigger, with a good deal of imagination and not much perseverance" (44, 69). Employed as a book-binder, he becomes "shabby and work-stained (74); and much in debt: "He not only hadn't a penny, but was much in debt" (234). In this grim London of poverty and deprivation, in this "busy, pasty, sticky, leathery little world" (234) wages go down, and Hyacinth is cast away as insignificant in comparison with the aristocrats and the rich. By the same token, the dressmaker, Miss Pynsent, is described as poor and helpless and can hardly manage a means of living for herself and Hyacinth. She and Hyacinth suffer "sighs of unspeakable misery" (416). Pynsent is finally dead, in Hyacinth's view, because "of her poor career, of her unaffected remorse for the trick she had played him in his boyhood [that his mother is dead]" (328). By the same token, Millicent Henning, Hyacinth's friend in boyhood, is also portrayed as poor and vulgar: "she was vulgar, clumsy, and grotesquely ignorant; her conceit was proportionate and she hadn't a grain of tact or of quick perception" (120). James adds that she

> Was to her blunt, expanded finger-tips, a daughter of London, of the crowded streets and bustling traffic of the great city. She had drawn her health and strength from its dingy courts and foggy thoroughfares and peopled its sparks and squares and crescents with her ambitions; it had entered into her blood and her bone, the sound of her voice and the carriage of her head. . . . She represented its [London's] immense vulgarities and curiosities, its brutality . . . . [She] is a flower of the clustered parishes. (63)

By the same terms, Hyacinth's mother, Florentine, is low and vulgar, and so are most of the people Hyacinth comes in contact with in the name of the revolutionary cause. Paul Muniment is a poor artist who lives in a poor shelter in London. His sister Rose Muniment is also poor and belongs to the lower class, and so is her father. Her father, she tells Hyacinth, worked "in the mines, where filthy coal's dug out" (115). He lived and worked in the "pit" (115). Rose Muniment further adds: "My father was as black as the coal he worked on . . . [finally] one night he strayed so far that he never came home. He had fallen into a gravel-pit; he didn't know where he was going" (115). Mrs. Bowerbank is also poor and deprived. Similarly, Eustache Poupin, the revolutionist, Mr. Vetch and his wife, Hofendhal and other revolutionists are also people who belong to the working class. Mr. Vetch is a poor musician, "whose fate had condemned him for the last ten years to play a fiddle at a second-rate establishment for a few shillings a week" (38). And imagining his situation and that of his people in London, and their helplessness and determination, Hyacinth, James writes,

[4] All subsequent references to James's *The Princess Casamassima* will be to page number and appear in parentheses.

> by the nature of his mind . . . was perpetually, almost morbidly conscious that the circle in which he lived was an infinitesimally small in the roaring vortex of London, and his imagination plunged again and again into the flood that whirled past it and round it, in the hope of being carried to some brighter, happier vision—the vision of societies where, in splendid rooms, with smiles and soft voices, distinguished men, with women who were both proud and gentle, talked of art, literature and history. (114)

This aristocratic world that Hyacinth dreams of is his and his friends' in that dirty and poor London where they experience only hunger and suffering. Among this crowd of the pauper revolutionists in the novel, however, James introduces one spark of aristocracy in one of his characters, namely, Princess Casamassima. But even this character is attached to the commonness and vulgarity of London. Although rich and aristocratic in the manner she sympathizes with the poor and she works with Hyacinth and others to help them. In this sense, she is considered to be on their side. By the same token, the princess, the only aristocrat in the novel, is portrayed by James, as will be explained later, as a corrupted person and a user. In short, James's characters in the novel are of the lower class like the naturalistic characters in several other naturalistic novels such as *The Octopus* (1901) and *McTeague* (1899) by Frank Norris; *Nana (1972) and La Bete Humane* (1891) by Emile Zola, as well as *Sister Carrie (1900)* and *The Financier* (1912) by Theodor Dreiser.

James renders the settings in which these characters live grim and dirty. Naturalistic shade as a result of this description of the slums comes out not of an interest in imitating the naturalists, but as a result of a deep concern to reflect a frank picture of London. For instance, of the mean and degrading conditions of the setting of the novel—London—James writes in his "Preface":

> Truly, of course, there are London mysteries (dense categories of dark arcana) for every spectator, and it's in a degree of exclusion and a state of weakness to be without experience of the manner conditions, the lower manners and types, the general sordid struggle, weight of the burden of labor, the ignorance, the misery and the vice. With such matters as those my tormented young man would have had contact—they would have formed, fundamentally, from the first, his natural immediate London." (James, "Preface," 17)

James plans in the "Preface" that his representation of London would be as that of "some sinister anarchic world, heaving in its pain, its power and its hate; a presentation not of sharp particulars," (Ibid, 21) but historical. James, in this sense, is a critical historian who fictionalizes life in London, in Nicholas Tingles's words in his article "Realism, Naturalism, and Formalism: James and *The Princess Casamassima,*" not to "arrive at presumably scientific conclusions" (1988, 61) which Zola attempted in his writing his naturalistic novels, but to record it as he observed it. James, for instance, observed that London is governed by "utility and need" which makes it a "vulgar world" (Tingles, 60). Using *free indirect style*[5], James lets his characters in the novel express this vulgarity. The shadows made by the night-lamps of Lomax-Palace in London, for instance, are observed by Hyacinth as "imposing shadows of objects low and mean" (James, *The Princess Casamassima*, 330). James's description is very grim and pessimistic. London is "carboniferous" (76), and in princess Casamassima's eyes, is "the dusky multitude of chimney-pots and the small black houses beneath them . . . everything that covered the earth was ugly and sordid and seemed to express or to represent the weariness of void" (180). Hyacinth, at some point in the novel, remembers the place in which he was raised when a child—Lomax –Palace—and its grimness comes back to him:

> He had followed with an imagination that went further in that direction than ever before the probable consequences of his not having been adopted in his babyhood by the dressmaker. The workhouse and the gutter, ignorance and cold, filth and tatters, nights of huddling under bridges and in doorways, vermin, starvation and blows, possible even the vigorous efflorescence of an inherited disposition of crime—these things, which he saw with unprecedented vividness, suggested themselves as his natural portion. (330)

At another point in the novel, James reveals how Hyacinth recalls his childhood in London:

> The ambiguous appeal he had felt as a child in all the aspects of London came back to him from the dark detail of its banks and the sordid agitation of its bosom: the great arches and pillars of the bridges, where the water rushed and the funnels tipped and sounds made an echo and there seemed an overhanging of interminable processions; the miles of ugly wharves and water houses, the lean protrusions of chimney, mast and crane; the painted signs of grimy industries straining and bumping on some business as to which everything was vague but that it was remarkably dirty; the clumsy coasters and colliers which thickened as one went somehow, looking up from their oars at the steamer, as

[5]Free indirect style is when the voice of a third-person narrator takes on the style and 'voice' of one of the characters within the story or novel.

> they rocked in the oily undulations of its wake, appeared profane and sarcastic; in short, all the grinding, puffing, smoking, splashing activity of the turbid flood. (392-93)

Newgate prison is the most thoroughly documented place in the novel. James's description of it is frank and vivid. Like the naturalists, James follows a kind of "investigative reporting" in his description, supported by real life-like details which he collected upon his vising Millbark prison. When Miss Pynsent takes Hyacinth to the prison to see his mother, for instance, James describes their journey in minute detail. The appearance of the prison is as horrible as the criminals inside it. Hyacinth, Miss Pynsent and Miss Bowerbank

> made the last part of their approach on foot, having got themselves deposited as near as possible to the river and keeping beside it (according to advice elicited by Miss Pynsent, on the way, in a dozen confidential interviews with policemen, conductors of omnibuses and small shopkeepers) till they came to a big dark-towered building which they would know as soon as they looked at it lift its dusky mass from the bank of the Thames, lying there and sprawling over the whole neighborhood with brown, bare, windowless walls, ugly, truncated pinnacles and a character unspeakable are sad and stern. It looked very sinister and wicked, to Miss Pynsent's eyes, and she wondered why a prison should have such an evil air if it was erected in the interest of justice and order—a builded [sic] protest, precisely, against vice and villainy. This particular penitentiary struck her as about as bad and wrong as those were in it; it threw a blight on the face of the day, making the river seem foul and poisonous. (50)

The prison is documented as a "huge dark tomb" (52). James's representation of its interior is intensively detailed: "She [Miss Pynsent] had only had meanwhile a confused impression of being surrounded with high black walls, whose inner face was more dreadful than the other, the one that overlooked the river; of passing through grey, stony courts, in some of which dreadful figures, scarcely female, in hideous brown misfitting and perfect frights of hoods, were marching round in a circle, of squeezing up steep unlighted staircases at the heels of a woman who had taking possession of her at the first stage" (53). The place "seemed cruel to the poor little dressmaker" (953), and even a labyrinth. James writes that when she makes her way "into the circular shafts of cells where she had an opportunity of looking at captives through grated peepholes and of edging past readings familiarize him with the social and economic injustices of his world and of the historical revolutions such as the French Revolution through which, in his own words, "the rotten fabric of the actual social order" is eliminated (252). He spends most of his time reading, as James tells us:

> The boy was often planted in front of the little sweet-shop on the other side of the street, an establishment where periodical literature, as well as tough toffee and hard lollipops, was dispensed and where song-books and pictorial sheets were attractively exhibited in the small-paned dirty window. He used to stand there for half an hour at a time and spell out the first page of the romances in the *Family Herald* and the *London Journal*, where he particularly admired the obligatory illustration in which the noble characters (they were always of the highest birth) were presented to the carnal eye. (26)

He spends most of his money on books: "When he had a penny he spent only a fraction of it on a stale sugar candy; for the remaining half a penny he always bought a ballad with a vivid woodcut at the top" (26). At fifteen, Miss Pynsent asserts, Hyacinth "had read almost every book in the world," and the "limits of his reading had been in fact only the limits of his opportunity" (88). These aristocratic talents, which James emphasizes several times in the novel, are inherited from his father. Like his father, who is, in Miss Pynsent's words, "very high" and aristocratic (28), Hyacinth has the looks of an aristocratic gentleman. His sense of adoring aristocracy and gentlemanliness is enhanced by Miss Pynsent, who always encouraged him to be like his father, for after all, Miss Pynsent herself "adored the aristocracy" (28).

Alongside this aristocratic stream in Hyacinth's blood runs his mother's blood. She is described to him as a working-class girl who "stabbed his lordship [Hyacinth's father] in the back with a very long knife" (29), and for committing that deed received a "full sentence" in prison (29). In the words of Mrs. Bowerbank, she was a "vivid low foreigner" (29), and her history is "unmentionable." Anastasius Vetch, who will later be a close friend to Hyacinth, also asserts that his mother was "very low" (51) and that it is only right that her past has been "obliterated" (55). Such badness in the mother affects the views of others toward Hyacinth himself. He is said to have the very looks of the French, or, in Miss Pynsent's words, he is a "little plastered –up Frenchman" (71). His mother's origins are offered as an explanation for his attraction to common and vulgar people. He spends most of his time with the street girl Millicent Henming, who encourages him to love and be on the side of the poor and common people.

Hyacinth is portrayed by James therefore as confused and lost because he has in his blood the aristocratic and vulgar streams. These are not destructive or corrupted qualities but are rendered dangerous by James for a person who is as sensitive, enthusiastic, curious, romantic, and artistic as Hyacinth. Hyacinth's despair, for instance, arises out of the division in the hereditary interests

mentioned before. Further, he begins to live illusions about what his father might have looked like, and what his life will be like if his mother is still alive. He believes that he is a "stranger" and an "exception" in his world and that he had "blood in my veins that's not the blood of people" (183). He is, in other words, conscious of his hereditary defects, exactly like Lantier in Zola's *Germinal (1883).* But whereas Lantier tries to resist his hereditary diseases (alcohol and sexual corruption) and free himself from their effects, Hyacinth keeps himself occupied with his hereditary origins and does not ignore them or act as if they are not there. He surrenders to their destructiveness. He fears people will reject him for his mother's low origins, and that is why he so often hides his true self from people. The most detestable question for him is that which people always ask—the questions about his origins: "he always suffered, to sickness, when people began to hover about the question of his origin, the reasons why Pinnie had had the care of him from [sic] a baby" (80) and saved him from "starv[ing] in the gutter and the charity of people" (37). This fear of the real makes Hyacinth go through life trying to hide who he really is. As James writes: "he wished to go through life in his own character, but he checked himself with the reflection that this was exactly what he was apparently destined not to do. His own character? He was to cover that up as carefully as possible; he was to go through life in a mask, in a borrowed mantle; he was to be every day and every hour an actor" (79). Even when young, the question about his origins does not leave him and makes him live in further misery and confusion. In philosophizing Hyacinth's hereditary dilemma James writes:

> He didn't really know if he was French or English, or which of the two he should prefer to be. His mother's blood, her suffering in an alien land and unspeakable, irremediable misery that consumed her in a place and among people she must have execrated—all this made him French; yet he was conscious at the same time of qualities that didn't mix with it. (96)

James mentions Hyacinth's heredity at several places in the novel because of its significant effect on his character and later his fate. As James writes elsewhere in the novel:" I mention these dim broodings . . . because they were to be a constant element in his moral life and need to be remembered in any view of him at a given time" (430).

James asserts that those hereditary broodings of Hyacinth make him vibrate between one idea and another, live in fantasy and a false world, and depart from reality. He is trying to find hypotheses, expressions, and justifications for who he is, and who his father and mother are, but uselessly:

> There was no peace for him between the two currents that flowed in his nature, the blood of his passionate plebeian mother and that of his long-descended super civilized sire. They continued to toss him from one side to the other; they arrayed him in intolerable defiance and revenge against himself. He had a high ambition: he wanted neither more nor less than to get hold of the truth and wear it with the vague clumsy fermentation of his first impulses towards social criticism, but since the problem had become more complex by the fact that many things in the world as it was constituted were to grow intensely dear to him he had tried more and more to construct some conceivable and human countenance for his father—some expression of horror, of tenderness and recognition, of unmerited suffering, or at least of adequate expiation. To desert one of these presences for the other—that idea was the source of shame, as an act of treachery would have been; for he could almost hear the voice of his father asking him if it were the conduct of a gentleman to take up the opinions and emulate the crudities of fanatics and cads. . . . He had worked himself round to allowances, to interpretations, so such hypotheses. (429)

James asserts that "the two authors" inside him—the aristocratic father and the vulgar and common mother—never rest in peace:

> Sometimes in imagination, he sacrificed one of the authors of his being to the other, throwing over Lord Frederick much oftener [sic], sometimes; when the theory failed that his father would have done great things for him if he had lived, or the assumption broke down that he had been Florentine Virvin's only lover, he cursed and disowned them alike; sometimes he arrived at conceptions which presented then side by side, looking at him with eyes infinitely sad but quite unashamed—eyes that seem to tell him they had been surpassingly unfortunate but had not been base. (431)

Being so confused and lost, Hyacinth falls easily under the influence of politicians who attach him to their revolutionary causes, and who, in doing so, contribute further to his confusion, destruction, and victimization. Before approaching the influence of those revolutionists on Hyacinth, it must be emphasized that Hyacinth himself, as a result of his lonely walks which enriched his consciousness with observations and impressions, senses that injustice and corruption prevail in London society. Hyacinth traveled much, as James writes, and he "observed … much historical information" about the social and economic conditions of England in particular and Europe in general (350). He saw the "poverty" and the "pain" of his world, and his "adventures and his impressions [collected] in France and Italy" (374), together with those he has accumulated in England led him to view the world around him as pessimistic and full of injustices. For example, James gives us Hyacinth's vision of the French revolution upon observing victimization and hunger during his visit to France:

> He had seen in a rapid vision the guillotine in the middle, on the side of the inscrutable obelisk, and tumbrils, with waiting victims, were stationed around the circle now made majestic by the monuments of the cities of France. The great legend of the French revolution, a surmise out of a sea of blood, was more real to him than anywhere else. (349)

What Hyacinth dreams of is a loving world where justice and happiness prevail, a world in which there are no poverty, no hunger, and, above all, no destruction and victimization. He wishes people would love each other and live in peace, drinking coffee and tea while talking about art, history, and politics. All these dreams of Hyacinth are entangled in a cruel industrialized and urbanized world. Hyacinth, in other words, is a version of the late James whose sense of the harsh reality of nineteenth-century America and Europe made him the pessimist naturalist who inscribed frankly what his world looked like in its social, economic, and political conditions. As James writes in his "Preface" to the novel: "what a man thinks and what he feels are the history and the character of what he does; on all of which things the logic of intensity rests" (12). Whereas James expresses his pessimism and rebellion against an unjust industrial world in fiction, James shows it in his confused and disturbed words, feelings and false Utopian dreams, and in his depressed self and his sympathy above all with the revolutionary spirit of his political friends. He becomes very confused by the bleakness of his world. Upon observing the helplessness of the poor and their suffering, he becomes further dissatisfied with the social and economic situation of London. Like James, he "had been walking about all day—he walked from rising till bedtime every day of the week" (335). And like James, while in London, he "had seen so much, felt so much, learnt so much, thrilled and throbbed and laughed and sighed so much" upon seeing the poverty and degrading situations of the poor like him (335). Although he "was proud to be associated with the superb of [London]" and with "so many proofs of civilization that had no visible rough spots" (336), he, like James, "had his perplexities and even now and then a revulsion for which he had made no allowance, as when it came to him that the most brilliant city in the world was also the most bloodstained" (336). It puzzled him "that the people of London should ever have the fierceness of hunger" when there are so many rich people. And because of "his quick sensibility" (338), he was affected deeply by the economic situation of the city, condemned the rich and became reactionary (338-39).

Bewildered as Hyacinth is with such feelings and sensations about the romantic and social conditions of London and lost because of despair and hopelessness in the modern civilization of the aristocrats, he seeks any door leading to a just life. As James explains in his "Preface": "what was essential with this was that he should have a social—not less than a socialist—connection, find a door somehow open to him in the appeased and civilized state, into the warmer glow of things he is precisely to help to undermine" (18). He liked the poor and liked to be with them and do something for them:

> He liked the people who looked as if they had got their week's wage and were prepared to lay it out discretely, and even those whose use of it would plainly be extravagant and intemperate; and, best at all, those who evidently hadn't received it at all and who wandered about disinterestedly and vaguely, their hands in empty pockets, watching others make their bargains and fill their satchels, or staring at the striated sides of bacon. . . . He liked the reflections of the lamps on the wet pavements, the feeling and smell of the carboniferous London. (76).

The German revolutions Hoffendhal and Schnikel, the French revolutionist Eustache Poupin and his wife and the English revolutionist Paul Muniment are people whom Hyacinth meets and who influence him greatly. He comes to learn their socialistic words by heart: "Hyacinth knew their vocabulary by heart and could have said everything, in the same words, that on any given occasion M. Poupin was likely to say" (93). All of them, like Hyacinth, view Europe as "corrupt and dreary" (273) and believe that the rich are responsible for this. They believe that they live in a "corrupted world" in which "there's an immense underworld peopled with a thousand forms of revolutionary passion and devotion" (290). To Paul Muniment, his current world is the rotten one which the French Revolution passed over without changing it: He reflects, "It's the old regime again, the rottenness and extravagance, bristling with every iniquity and every abuse, over which the French Revolution passed like a whirlwind; or perhaps even more reproduction of the Roman world in its decadence" (273).

Mr.Poupin has a great influence on Hyacinth. He is his closest friend and is described by James as a "lonely, disappointed, embittered, [and] cynical little man" (38). He came to England after the commune of 1871 "to escape the reprisals of the government," and he admired Hyacinth upon seeing him and "marked claim upon Hyacinth's esteem and gratitude" (84). After all, Hyacinth is his "parrain," and "his protector at the hinder" (84). Paupin, who is in James's words, a "regressive socialist" (85), believes that the rich should be threatened till justice is achieved in the world. He tells Hyacinth that the revolution against the rich should be a force "that will make the bourgeois go down into their cellars and hide, pale with fear, behind their barrels of wine and their heaps of gold" (94). Paupin, James says, "reduced the boy, on his side, to a kind of prostration before his delicate wonder-working fingers." By the same token, Mr. Vetch, who taught Hyacinth "French and socialism" and who "controlled [Hyacinth] when he was miserable" (90), is obsessed with a revolutionary cause. At one point in the novel, for example, he tells Hyacinth, "I'm suffering extremely, but we must suffer so long as the social question is so abominably, so iniquitously neglected" (91). He will never stop working and arranging for the revolution till social justice prevails: "I will go on till the day of justice, till the reintegration of the despoiled and disinterested is ushered in with a force that will shake the globe" (91). Rose Muniment, Paul's sister, has an effect

on Hyacinth like that of Vetch and Poupin. She "was ashamed of being rich . . . . She was a tremendous socialist; she was worse than anyone—she was worse even than Paul" (106); and she, James adds, "seemed to want to give up everything to those who were below her and never to expect any thanks at all . . . She wanted to talk to you sociable-like" (112). Rose comes even to intensify Hyacinth's vision of his misery and loneliness when she tells him the tragic story of her parents, especially her poor father who died a stranger (116). She has with Hyacinth long conversation about socialism and revolution (109).

Hyacinth is further immersed in the revolution and its causes to his fingertips when he takes a place in the revolutionary club, the "Sun and the Moon." The basic function of this club, James writes, is destructive: "what they wanted was to put forth their night without any more palaver; to do for something or for someone; to go out somewhere and smash something on the spot" (254). Then, James adds of the revolutionists' purposes: "their game must be now to frighten society, and frighten it effectually; to make it believe that the swindled classes were at least in the league—had really grasped the idea that, closely combined, they would be irresistible" (255). The German revolutionist Schnikel has great authority in his club, and his revolutionary views are absorbed by Hyacinth. Hyacinth's ideas about the aristocrats, for instance, are violent and bloody; he comes to hate them to the extreme and calls them "bloody snakes" (251). He wishes to associate himself only with what he calls "the kind of people I want to know" (121), namely, the people who belong to the "party of action" (120); the socialists and revolutionists. He comes preoccupied with his hallucinatory dreams about a better world (122); his basic concern becomes the fate of the "cheated and crushed" and the "groaning toiling millions" (117). The misery of the people "is . . . always on his heart" (417). As James further writes:

> When he himself was not letting his imagination wander among the haunts of the aristocracy and stretching it in the shadow of an ancestral beech to read the last number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* he was occupied with contemplations of a very different kind; he was absorbed in the struggles and sufferings of the millions whose life flowed in the same current as his and who, though they constantly excited his disgust and made him shrink and turn away, had the power to chain his sympathy, to raise it to passion, to convince his for the time at least that real success in the world would be to do something with them and for them. (129)

Clearly, James diverges greatly from his early moderate realism, which had never incorporated such horrible themes of violence and rebellion. He had never indeed approached any kind of politics in his early realistic fiction. The sensationalism in the novel reminds us of that in the naturalistic novels of Norris, Crane, Dreiser and other late nineteenth-century American naturalists. Further, socialism in the novel is significantly compared with that of Sinclair in *The Jungle* and that of Sandburg in his "Chicago Poems." But James complicates the matter further here in projecting socialism as a device of destruction in action to his "little hero" Hyacinth. Hyacinth is not just victimized by his heredity and poverty, but also by the influence of socialist people on him like Poupin and Vetch, who confuse and torment his lost self. During the socialists' violent discussions in the club, Hyacinth, for instance, listens "with divided attention" and to "interlaced iterations" (254). Because of the tragic situation of his identity, "of the reverberations of the past" (339), he cannot stop thinking about who he is and what his fate would be, and he can therefore hardly focus when others address him. Confusion and division in identity come to distort his thinking and distract his attention. Sometimes he listens eagerly to Poupin and others when talking about socialism, and at other times, he keeps silent and distracted: "he had deviations and lapses, moments when the social question bored him and he forgot not only his own wrongs, which would have been pardonable but these of the people at large, of his brothers and sisters in misery" (92).

A further naturalistic ingredient in the novel is James's assertion of the influence of forces working on Hyacinth over which he has no control. James projects Hyacinth as doomed to a fate that destroys him and as lost in a universe which pays no attention to him. He asserts several times in the novel Hyacinth's own awareness of his victimhood. As James writes, "He felts helpless and baffled, foredoomed to failure" (417). He becomes conscious of the effect of this fate on him—a fate which James conceptualizes in his "Preface" as a "lively inward revolution" inside Hyacinth (14). Hyacinth himself comes to philosophize his situation and that of other poor and helpless creatures searching for the cause of his and their misery and reaches the conclusion that his indifferent universe is the cause: "He [Hyacinth] wondered what fate there could be in the great scheme of things for a planet overgrown with such vermin; what redemption but to be hurled against a ball of consuming fire. If it was the fault of the rich as Paul Muniment held, the selfish congested rich who allowed such abominations to flourish, that made no difference and only shifted the shame; since the terrestrial globe, a visible failure produced the cause as well as the effect" (431). And at another point in the novel, Hyacinth, like most naturalistic characters, views himself as determined and doomed:

> The manner in which it's [the world] organized is what astonished me [Hyacinth]. I knew that though I knew it, in a general way, the reality was a revelation. And on top of it, all society lives! People go and come, and buy and sell, and drink and dance, and make money and make love, and seem to know nothing and suspect nothing and think of nothing, and iniquities flourish, and the misery of half the world is prated about as a 'necessary evil,' and generations rot away and starve in the midst of it, and day follows day, and everything is for the best in the best of possible worlds.

> All that's one half of it; the other half is that everything's doomed! In silence, in darkness, but under the feet of each one of us, the revolution lives and works. (290)

As the novel proceeds, Hyacinth becomes more conscious of his helplessness, and of the "infinite" unknowable force that controls him. James explains Hyacinth's situation in a naturalistic manner: he views him as under the influence of forces of which Hyacinth is ignorant:

> With his mixed, divided nature, his conflicting sympathies, his eternal habit of swinging from one view to another, he regarded the prospect in different moods with different intensities . . . . At the same time, there was joy and exultation in the thought of surrendering one's self to the wash of the wave, of being carried higher in the sun-touched crests of wild billows than one could ever be by a dry lonely effort of one's own. That vision could deepen to ecstasy; make it indifferent to one's ultimate fate, in such a heaving sea, were not almost certainly to be submerged in bottomless depths or dashed to pieces on immovable rocks. Hyacinth felt that, whether his personal sympathy should rest finally with the victors or the vanquished, the victorious force was potentially infinite and would require no testimony from the irresolute. (428)

In this sense, James casts Hyacinth, like most naturalistic figures, as doomed, deprived of free will, and as a victim of what he calls in his "Preface" Robinson's "recorded" fate (10), and a hostile universe. James's words parallel those of Norris and Dreiser who assert such philosophy about fate and an indifferent universe as the chief means by which their characters are victimized.[6]
James does not imply that only fate affects Hyacinth's life, like the typical naturalists, he asserts the importance of luck and chance in shaping one's life as well. He reveals that human beings are immersed in a dark world in which only the lucky can escape its danger:

> In these hours the poverty and ignorance of the multitude seemed so vast and preponderant, and so much the law of life, that those who had managed to escape from the black gulf were only the happy few, spirits of resource as well as children of luck: they inspired in some degree the interest and sympathy that one should feel for survivors and victors, those who have come safely out of a shipwreck or a battle. (428)

What is at stake here then is that Hyacinth's victimization is a result of several effects—biological, social, political and economic. First, as suggested before, his own heredity origins render him a divided person who is lost and aimless. His confusion about his origin leads him to make guesses and hypothesize about his identity. This ambiguous identity makes him depressed, alone, and desperate. He loves to reveal his "torment" to someone, whom he can trust, but he cannot find anyone who deserves to know his secretive misery, and this torments him more. Even Princess Casamassima proves to be false and corrupted. Instead of helping him, she plays with his mind and heart. Hyacinth likes her because he feels that she could understand human needs (157). She pretended to be a socialist, but in fact, she is *a femme fatale* whose ultimate effect is corruption and destruction. Hyacinth himself is conscious of her effect when he asks Paul Muniment, "do you suppose she'll corrupt me?" (172). She associates herself with Hyacinth just for the fun of it, for she thinks: "why shouldn't I have any book-binder after all? In attendance . . . . It would be awfully chic. We might have immense fun" (217). She regards Hyacinth as a "curious animal" whom she can pull to her side by revealing to him her interest in his thoughts and attitudes about the poor and the deprived. She pretends to make studies about the "people of the lower orders" (221) and asks Hyacinth to show her the slums and the degrading life of London. But later Hyacinth figures out that she is "perverse" and "can only exasperate" (222). Realizing her destructive influence upon Hyacinth, James writes, "The girl [the Princess Casamassima] had given the rein to a fine faculty of the free invention of which he [Hyacinth] had frequent glimpses, under the pressure of her primitive half-childish, the half plebeian impulse of destruction, the instinct of pulling down what was above her, the reckless energy that would, precisely, make her so effective in revolutionary scenes" (213). She is the typical corrupted female of naturalistic fiction like Esther Waters in Moore's *Esther Waters*, Carrie in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, and, particularly, Nana in Zola's *Nana*—who exploits, uses, and corrupts men. The Princess is rendered "tricky" in the novel and in Madame Grandoni's words, "a capriccioso" (264). In truth, she is, James writes, very modern (215). Hyacinth's "naiveté," James writes, "would entertain her" (271). Then, he writes, she is "a bad ravening flirt" (281). Her opinions and thoughts are "perversity itself" (110). She tricks Hyacinth and makes him fall in love with her to the point, as he admits to her, that he is willing to kill somebody for her (314).

[6] Norris, for example, in *The Octopus* philosophizes that the universe is an "enormous engine, restless, relentless . . . that sped straight forward, driving before it the infinite herd of humanity . . . grinding them to dust." And in *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser philosophizes that man is a helpless animal who is driven by forces which he cannot control. In his chapter "The Problem of Philosophy in the Naturalistic Novel," Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (1984), 59-69), Pizer has an excellent discussion on the naturalists' philosophy about the helplessness of man and his being determined by fate.

Like the Princess, the effect of his friends upon him is destructive. They encourage him to live in an illusory world of love and peace which is contradictory to his own real world of injustice and misery. James hints at this contradiction in his "Preface" to the novel:

> The complications most interesting then would be that he should fall in love with the beauty of the world, actual order and all, at the moment of his most feeling and most hating the famous 'iniquity of its social arrangements'; so that his position as an irreconcilable pledged enemy to it, thus rendered false by something more personal than his opinions and his vows, becomes the sharpest of his torments. To make a torment that really matters, however, he must have got practically involved, specifically committed to the stance he has, under the pressure of more knowledge, found impossible, out of which has come for him the deep dilemma of the disillusioned and repentant conspirator. He has thrown himself into the more than "shady" underworld of militant socialism, he has undertaken to play a part- a part that with the drop of his exasperation and the growth, simply expressed of his taste, is out of all tune with his passion, at any cost, for life itself, the life, whatever it be, that surrounds him. (18)

Those "militant socialists" later victimize Hyacinth further when they indulge him in a crazy idea of doing something for the revolution, namely, killing somebody "instantly and absolutely without question" (294). With this burden in his heart, together with his difficult economic situation and lost and confused self, Hyacinth walks aimlessly seeking a "company to lighten up his gloom" (483). He vacillates between Millicent, the Princess, and Rose, but nobody offers him comfort, for, after all, he no longer "believes in people" (497). Mr. Poupin tries to warn Hyacinth of this when he tells him: "Your opinion, your sympathies, and your whole attitude. I don't approve it—*je le constate*. You've withdrawn your confidence from the people" (497). But it is too late for advice now. Further, a sensitive reader can realize that Poupin and other socialists are the ones who have led Hyacinth to stop trusting people, for they have encouraged him after all to live the false dream of an Utopian world which they have drawn for him. As a result, Hyacinth becomes "tired," "exhausted" (514), especially when the Princess, his closest friend, betrays him. His mind falls to "pieces" again (529), and he "went forth again into the streets, into the squares, into the parks, yet once again in the great indifferent city . . . solicited by an aimless desire to steep himself" (529). Aimless and undecided, he finally, "shot himself through the heart" in his lodgings in Westminister (537).

From the previous discussion of James's representation of Hyacinth's character, one can easily recognize the strong naturalistic element in the novel. James depicts Hyacinth as helpless and determined by heredity, fate, and environment; he is the typical naturalistic figure portrayed in the fiction of other American naturalists such as Crane, Norris, and Dreiser who are portrayed in their fiction as determined and helpless figures. Hyacinth, like most naturalistic figures, is depicted in a poor environment and slum settings of London in which James fictionalizes themes of violence and sensationalism. Further, the suicidal end of Hyacinth ranks the novel a typical naturalistic novel similar to those by Zola. More significantly, James's intensive documentation of London and its people, its social, economic, and political conditions, renders him a typical naturalist.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.
**Conflicts of interest:** The Authors declare no conflict of interest.
**Publisher's Note:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and reviewers.

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