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## Naturalism in Eduard Vilde's novel *Iron Hands*

In 1897 Eduard Vilde was invited to work as an editor for *Virmaline*, a newspaper published in Narva. He accepted the invitation, for he was interested in Narva as one of the largest industrial centres in Estonia, especially considering its textile manufacturing. In 1898 *Iron Hands*, Vilde's novel about Krenholm manufacturing workers, was serialised in the newspaper. It was the first industrial novel to be written in Estonian.

*Iron Hands* is a novel that explores the ultimate boundaries by portraying the darker side of human existence, and topics that are socially sensitive or taboo. I will analyse the novel from the point of view of Naturalism and the concept of entropy, which in literary research is understood as a process leading to destruction and decay. The novel portrays the interrelation of the milieu and the characters and explores how the modern industry affects his working-class protagonists. I suggest that in *Iron Hands* urbanisation with the accompanying social problems can be seen as a catalyst of decay.