

THEODORE DREISER AND HIS INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN REALISM

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Abstract. This article delves into the profound influence of Theodore Dreiser on American Realism. Dreiser, once a celebrated figure in American literature, is explored in the context of his enduring impact on subsequent generations of writers. The author discusses Dreiser's signature style, characterized by biographical novels that meticulously examine the complex interactions between individuals and their surrounding society. Beginning with works like «Sister Carrie,» Dreiser's naturalistic tendencies are evident as he delves into the psychophysiological factors that shape his characters' destinies.

Key words: American Realism, Influence, Novels, Social Relations, Biographical Novels, Naturalism, American Capitalism

Theodore Dreiser not only quickly gained fame, but to a certain extent even outlived his fame. He very quickly turned into a living classic, into a monument to himself, and at the moment when his works were approved in American literature. The next generation had already begun its creative activity, which wrote completely differently. And Dreiser already looked archaic in the 20s. No wonder Faulkner, considered the best writer of the 20th century in America, spoke quite clearly: «Dreiser's tread was heavy, but just as all Russian Literature came out of Gogol's Overcoat, we all came out of Dreiser's novels.» We are all him, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Hemingway...

What did Dreiser do, if we talk about his works in general? They are generally extremely simple. These are biographical novels according to their model, all (from the first to the last) smoothly developing into epic novels about the same actor, where the central figure and her fate are always presented in close interaction with the surrounding world. Almost every novel of his biography is a study of the interactions of a person and the society surrounding him, society.

In the very first novel «Sister Kerry» (1901), again, naturalistic tendencies are extremely strong. There Dreiser, like London at that time, explains the reasons why the life of his heroine Caroline turned out the way it did, because she has a psychophysiological potential that drags her up the river of life.

But starting with the second novel «Jenny Gerhard» (1912), the study of social relations and how they determine human life begins. And from this point of view, all Dreiser's novels are exactly the same according to the principle of construction,

according to the objects of research. Different environments only, since the characters belong to different social strata, do different things, say, «Genius» — a conversation about the fate of the artist is not generally in bourgeois society, but in the world of emerging American capitalism. «Trilogy of desires» («Financier». «Titan», «Stoic»). «Financier» - there is the anatomy of the hapni of the American capitalists of the new formation, those who will create a capitalist society of the 20th century.

Dreiser's language is quite broadcloth, heavy: German English, since he is from a family of German immigrants and spoke German at home. He writes in English in a measured way, but sometimes very bright images, very bright pages

Break through the measured heavy style. Since Dreiser feels perfectly this new America, forming before his eyes, at the beginning of the 20th century. This is capitalist America. Until the end of the 19th century, the USA was an agrarian country. Only the Midwest – the area around the Great Lakes, Chicago, etc. At the turn of the century at the beginning of the 20th century industry begins to develop there, and the United States is very quickly – gaining industrial potential, capitalist industrial appearance, which is greatly helped by the successive 2 World Wars in Europe, in which the United States takes a specific part. And Dreiser becomes the first artist who captures the features of the new America and reflects them on the pages of his narrative. And together with these traits, he talks about the new people of the new era, who are building this era and using its fruits.

And hence the meaningful outcome of Dreiser's novels – a story about time, about society, an era in the simplest form of biographical novels. «Sister Carrie.» Critics condemned Carrie's sister for her behavior, and Dreiser for not condemning the heroine in turn. But Dreiser's creative method of that time was naturalism - a method that recognizes not the concepts of bad/ good, but the concept exists in nature. Carrie goes up, as it seems, with the help of a man, but in fact - thanks to her inner energy. Carrie achieves well-being, breaks up with her two men. But the second and last man (Hurstwood) does not have such energy. The divergence of these people begins. Carrie is able to do everything to survive, but Hurstwood broke down, his psycho-physiological potential has dried up, and Carrie has it huge. No one is to blame here, except for the very essence of life. That's why D. doesn't judge Carrie. After "Sister Carrie" in the work of D. due to fierce criticism, an eleven-year break followed.

1912 - "Jenny Gerhard" many plot parallels with "Sister Carrie". In "J.G.". however, it is no longer psychophysiology that is important, but how these relationships are interpreted by the surrounding society. Both men are loved by Jenny, but both of them were higher on the social ladder, so the meaning of conflicts was social. A millionaire from a family of millionaires -Lester. He is given a choice: to abandon Jenny (a former maid at the hotel) and be a full member of the clan, or not to

do business. Lester loves his job, but chooses Jenny. After a while, she herself returns him home, since he cannot live without his business. But even there he is unhappy.

The country abolished class prejudices, but erected material barriers. The story of a girl arranging her life is repeated, but shown from the other side - the social side of society is being investigated. Dreiser explores the new America emerging before his eyes at the beginning of the twentieth century.

"The Trilogy of Desires": the novels "The Financier" (1912), "Titan" (1914) and "Stoic" (1945) - the chronicle of America. This trilogy is a biography. Published posthumously in 1947. This is the life story of Frank Cowperwood and the history of America from the turn of the 1860-70s to the Great Depression - the end of the 1920s. The action takes place in Philadelphia ("Financier"), Chicago ("Titan"), London ("Stoic").

Dreiser always wrote biographical novels, and the story of the hero's life in them was combined with the characteristics of the era and the life of society at one time or another. It was Dreiser who became the first poet of the new industrial America, the America of Skyscrapers (an aesthetically significant reality of the twentieth century). Dreiser analyzes the inner life of society, reveals the laws of its development.

«An American Tragedy» (1925). The name is an opposition to the concept of the «American dream» - the way up, in which society gives everyone equal opportunities. This is a very old complex (the American dream), one of the founders of this complex. Benjamin Franklin, the author of the saying «Time is money». Explained a lot: every moment of life should be devoted to a specific productive activity, then you can achieve high results and realize the «American dream». At the center of the novel is the story of a man who dreamed of becoming a rich and respected member of society – Clyde Griffiths.

Reasons for failure:

1) Features of the psychology of the hero: Griffiths is a weak and ordinary person. Clyde ends up with a rich uncle who gives him a chance to make a career. But Clyde failed to take advantage of this chance. He has a grudge against his uncle, who gave him a small position, and Clyde was waiting for him to directly realize his dreams (car, high society, etc.).

Clyde decides to marry profitably, but it does not work out. The tragedy is not that he cannot adequately assess the situation. Dreiser questions the validity of the «American dream» principle. Clyde decides to kill the girl with whom he had an affair so that she could not prevent him from marrying Sondra. The decision to kill Roberta comes from a weakness of character.

2) A person exists in a certain social and ideological context, but does not have the ability to assert himself in this life, as the context dictates.

3) The American dream becomes an incentive not to work, but to kill. Dreiser repeats the situation three times:

Clyde himself; Roberta (killed by Clyde) wants to go up through Clyde: Clyde is the nephew of the owner of the factory where she works. At the same time, Dreiser does not simplify the situation: Clyde loves Sondra, at the same time, marriage is a means for him to get out to the top. Roberta, who loves Clyde, finds herself in the same position.

The story of the prosecutor – Prosecutor Mason. Mason knows how hard it is to climb up. He wants to get Clyde convicted as a representative of the Griffiths clan. Thus, he wants to take revenge on those who once humiliated him and at the same time get a chance to run for the post of state prosecutor.

Clyde didn't deal Roberta a fatal blow, so there is no decisive proof. Then the prosecutor allows his assistant to falsify this evidence. «American: a Tragedy» (1925) is a novel about the death of two lovers, which was the result of their desire to achieve the «American dream». In the 1830s, anti-fascist journalism became his weapon. To the end, he continued his spiritual search and still remains in literature an «unshakable giant of realism» (T Bulf). Thus, Dreiser introduces the theme of the author of social literature. Dreiser considered himself obliged to take part in public life. He is the author of many essays.

In conclusion, Theodore Dreiser was a prominent figure in American Realism, whose works focused on the interactions between individuals and society. His biographical novels, such as «Sister Carrie» and the «Trilogy of Desires,» provide a glimpse into the emerging capitalist America of the early 20th century. Despite criticism for his naturalistic approach, Dreiser's works continue to influence American literature and serve as a reflection of a particular era in American history.

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