

DREISER EXPLORED THE BIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR.

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Literature is an art form that reflects human life, its spiritual experiences, and its place in society. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, realism and naturalism dominated literature. In particular, naturalistic literature sought to reveal internal human conflicts related to the environment, social conditions, and material needs. One of the representatives of this movement is the American writer Theodore Dreiser, one of the most prominent exponents of the naturalistic novel.

Let's consider the origins of the main ideas of naturalism. Naturalism, as a branch of realism, emerged in the second half of the 19th century. In this regard, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the works of Theodore Dreiser are the most prominent representatives of the naturalistic style. Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945) focused on the social, moral, and economic crises of American culture in his works. In his works, Dreiser explored the biological and psychological foundations of human behavior, the influence of chance, and the impact of social forces on the fate of individuals and life experience. His books masterfully depict the impact of social pressure, material needs, and chance on human destiny. Following naturalistic principles, Dreiser shapes the lives of his characters based on their social context, innate qualities, and external influences. The development of naturalistic philosophy in fiction was largely influenced by the works of Theodore Dreiser from the 1890s to the 1920s, particularly his experiences as a journalist and his novels *Unfortunate Carrie* (1900), *The Capitalist* (1912), and *The Titan* (1914). Dreiser's debut novel, *Susan Lenzi* (1900), highlights the gap between morality and reality.[2] The protagonist reveals her vulnerability in the face of life's difficulties and loses her moral principles under the influence of the environment. The author's novel *The Capitalist* and its

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naturalistic components also deserve special attention. This approach aims to provide a scientifically grounded, objective, and materialistic understanding of existence. Naturalistic works have the following characteristics.

The philosophical theory of determinism (from the Latin *determino*, meaning “I determine”) asserts that everything is causally interconnected and objectively legally interrelated. It emphasizes that one phenomenon (cause) creates necessity under certain conditions, which, in turn, leads to another phenomenon (effect). The essence of determinism embodies the determining factor of human intellect. Determinism was recognized by the Eastern philosophers Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Beruni, Ulugh Beg, and others, as well as by the Greek philosophers Heraclitus, Democritus, and Epicurus. Determinism is the fundamental idea of psychology, and its principle serves as a compass in all areas of scientific knowledge and a practical path to the attainment of truth.[3]

In an objective description, the material world, which is independent of and exists outside of human consciousness, matter, which is the material form of existence, constitutes objective existence with all its manifestations and properties. Objective existence encompasses not only things, phenomena, and processes in nature, but also humans and society, which are the highest products of natural development.[4] People create material and objectified spiritual wealth through their theoretical and practical activities and interact with one another. All of this manifests itself in various forms of socialized objective existence.

Social class is a division of groups of people with different goals and interests into social classes, strata, which forms a special social system of society. Social class is a social rarity with its own place, status, and weight in the social system, in which it operates within the class or as an independent status.[5] A social class can have its place and status in the social system in accordance with the criteria of its contribution to the creation of the material and spiritual wealth of society, its share in its distribution. Social classes include the intelligentsia, entrepreneurs, the political elite, civil servants, and similar classes, each of which has its own uniqueness, rarity, and inimitable characteristics. One of Dreiser’s most famous works is the novel *The Capitalist*. [6] This novel emphasizes the values and moral decline of American capitalist society. The protagonist of the novel is Frank Cowperwood, a talented and enterprising businessman who does not obey moral standards in order to achieve his goals. The novel contains the following features of naturalistic literature. Social inequality, the erosion of spiritual values, and internal conflicts of the individual occupy a central place in Dreiser’s work. In his works, he highlights complex conflicts between the individual and society, the crisis of human values in a changing social environment. In the novel *An American Tragedy*, injustice in society, the struggle for wealth and status, and human errors are deeply analyzed through the character of Clyde Griffiths.[7] In the novel, through the tragedy of Clyde Griffiths, the writer describes the division of American society

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into class strata, the sharp differences between poverty and wealth, as well as personal tragedies resulting from the erosion of moral values.

Through his works, Dreiser encourages the reader to think deeply about human values and the problems of society. The writer is especially critical of the problems of the main social institutions of society - family, religion, education, and the economic system. According to Dreiser, these problems of society are reflected in the personal life of an individual, leading him to a tragic end.[8] The importance of the writer's work lies in the fact that, while remaining true to the principles of critical realism, he was able to openly and clearly depict the social and moral problems of society. The psychological complexity and internal struggle between personal aspirations and the influence of social environment depicted in Dreiser's works have secured his novels a prominent place in world literature.

Dreiser's first major novel, *Unlucky Carrie*, is a striking example of the naturalistic approach, in which the characters' lives are shaped by social and economic circumstances rather than moral ones. At various stages in Carrie's life, the work depicts the chaotic and predetermined nature of human existence.

Theodore Dreiser's works are among the finest examples of American naturalistic literature, providing profound insights into how capitalist society shapes human destiny. Despite his harsh criticism of his approach to naturalism, Dreiser continued to establish himself as a leading proponent of naturalism and realism. His books, *The Capitalist* and *The Titans*, depict the foundations of capitalist society and the complex interplay between self-interest and the broader social context.[9] It is difficult to describe contemporary literary criticism as a retreat from the political and social. This book, like my previous one, is devoted to both aspects. However, it provides a more direct answer to what some consider formalist questions: why do some literary works retain their appeal more than others?

I believe that a work's appeal depends not only on its prepared audience; it also arises from the structural connections the work establishes with its readers in relation to the issues it addresses. Thus, one answer to my question is that, to retain its appeal, a work must engage readers in a complex world such as history, rather than leave them confused and uncertain about their assessment of events both within and outside the text.[10] If I am right, then such appeal, while dependent on the specific issues it addresses, is not measured solely by the work's political stance.

It is important to clarify that a work's impact cannot be measured solely by its political stance, and not only because we can rarely pinpoint a work's political content. In my view, there is no non-historical category of literary work. On the contrary, what we today call a literary work has its own history. But because literary work is historically constructed, it has become a form of discourse that is not identical to a political position. Some argue that such discourse is impossible.[11] But of course there are socially and historically constructed differences between political discourse and a Henry James novel. We can certainly take a political stance on the question of whether we should continue to value such an institution

as the literary work. For some, it is inappropriate to support a discourse whose primary purpose is not to take particular positions on specific issues. Rather, I argue that, given the variety of institutions that allow us to express our political positions, literary discourse can serve an important political function in our society not only because it serves as a guide to political action but also because it creates a space in which our political beliefs can be tested and challenged through the dramatization of hypothetical events. Of course, this is not the only function of texts created and read in the field known as literature. There are also many other ways to test and challenge political beliefs: for example, through direct confrontation and debate over opposing positions, or through experiencing, observing, and reading about historical events. However, my own experience as a reader and teacher convinces me of the value of the method provided by literature. The works examined in this book, both realistic and unrealistic, are important to me because reading them in the context of legal history encouraged a rethinking of the role of contract.[5] This rethinking is another way this book differs from the book on the pre-war period.

By the time I finished that book, I was convinced that the legal contract was merely a means of legitimizing the unjust regime of the market economy. As the “failure” in the title of this book suggests, I have not completely abandoned this view. However, as the “promise” in the title suggests, I have modified it. An important way I came to appreciate the “promise of contract” was through experiencing the “contract” that realist texts offer their readers.

The methods realists developed for engaging with their audiences are one of the most important contributions to the creation of literature as it is defined today.[8] Through a series of comparisons, I will argue that the implicit contract between a realist work and its reader differs from the contract concluded between other works written at the time.

These works clearly demonstrate the deterministic worldview of naturalism, a critique of society, and a belief in the dependence of human consciousness on natural forces. Frank Cowperwood, as portrayed in his novels, is a traditional realist hero. Although his goals are based on pragmatism and unconstrained by morality, his actions are influenced by social conditions and personal abilities. Moral decay in the corporate sector and the clash between social pressure and self-interest are depicted through Frank Cowperwood in his novella “The Capitalist.” Dreiser attempted to explore social problems using a naturalistic approach and became known as one of the most truthful authors of his time, employing a naturalistic method to uncover society’s social difficulties and leaving behind brilliant masterpieces that exerted a significant influence on American naturalism.

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