



**THE PROTAGONIST OF THOMAS DREISER'S
NOVEL "AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY" IS SHOWN
TO BE DRIVEN BY THE DESTRUCTIVE
IMPACT OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY ON HIS
CHARACTER AND DESTINY.**

Fayzieva Komila Akhrorovna, associate professor,
University of Economics and Pedagogy.

E-mail: komila.fayziyeva.85@bk.ru

Tel: (90) 314 84 48

***Abstract.** To achieve the goal of our research, we have set the following tasks: solution: to reveal the meaning of the concepts of "American Dream" and "American Tragedy"; to identify the means of manifestation of destructive social influence in the novel; to study the main motives of the crime of Clyde Griffith; to conduct a comparative analysis to identify plot similarities between the novel by T. Dreiser and F.M. Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment" and M. Puzo's "The Last Grain".*

***Key words:** depiction of the physical realm, societal structure, objective representation, class hierarchy, capitalism, types of literary creation.*

The relevance of this research topic stems from the need for a deeper analysis of the main character of Thomas Dreiser's novel "An American Tragedy" from the point of view of the destructive influence of capitalist society on his character and fate. This society imposes false life goals and imaginary ideals on people, especially young men and women, and gives priority to material values at the expense of the spiritual component of life. Condemning the external well-being of Americans and their ideals, the American writer critically analyzes such vices as class

inequality and corruption inherent in modern reality, which makes his works very relevant. [1]

This article uses the following research methods to understand the reflection of harmful social influence in Thomas Dreiser's novel "An American Tragedy": descriptive, comparative and historical-typological. The research material is Thomas Dreiser's novel "An American Tragedy" [1] and his letters.

The theoretical basis of this article is the work of 20th-century American literary scholars devoted to the interpretation of the concept of "American Dream" in the works of Thomas Dreiser. Thus, M.K. Bakaeva and Z.Kh. Shamamedova in their articles reveal the concept, origin and essence of the "American Dream", describe in detail the necessary conditions for the emergence of this concept and interpret it mainly in the context of historical facts [2]. In analyzing the main issues in the novel "An American Tragedy", literary studies on the work of the famous American writer and general trends in 20th-century American literature [3] were used as a basis. In particular, Ya.N. Zasursky drew attention to the socio-critical direction of T. Dreiser's works. In the monographs of E.Ya. Batalov, a comprehensive comparative study of the "Russian idea" and the "American dream" as two great national myths that have had and continue to have a significant impact on the consciousness and self-awareness of Russians was carried out. Gumerova O.F., "Artistic models of the individual in creativity", showed how the works of progressive American writers reject bourgeois apologetic and anti-Soviet mythology. E. Yu. Gordeeva directs the vector of studying the heritage of T. Dreiser to reflect the national traditions of Americans [4].

Published in 1925, the novel “An American Tragedy” is one of the most famous works of American writer and public figure Theodore Dreiser. The author worked on this work for five years. The plot of the novel is based on the murder of Grace Brown in 1906 by her lover Chester Gillette, who was later sentenced to death in the electric chair. Inspired by this sensational case, Dreiser wrote fifteen short stories, which he called the resulting manuscript “American Tragedies”. Each story was devoted to a topical theme of the time: an American young man, trying to fulfill his dream of becoming rich by marrying a rich woman, decides to commit a crime. In a letter to Jack Wilgus, Thomas Dreiser admitted: “I have long thought about this story, because it seemed to me not only to reflect all aspects of our national life - politics, society, religion, business, sex, but also to be a very common story for every boy growing up in small American towns. It was a particularly true story of what life can do to a person and how helpless a person is against it.”

Moreover, according to the writer himself, his goal was not to moralize, but to reveal circumstances and psychology that could at least serve as an explanation, if not justification, for such murders, which, unfortunately, are so common in the United States.

Thomas Dreiser enters into a polemic with the plot popular at that time: the main character, a young man from a poor family, marries a rich bride from high society and achieves success. It should be noted that these types of novels glorified the desire of every American for material wealth and instilled hope in the ease of changing one's destiny. This is the essence of the concept of the “American Dream”: self-realization, equal opportunities and wealth for all [5].

The works of Theodore Dreiser are among the finest examples of American naturalistic literature, providing a profound understanding of how capitalist society shapes human destiny. Despite harsh criticism of the writer's 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 personal interests and the broader social context.[6]

It's difficult to describe contemporary literary criticism as a retreat from the political and social. This book, like my previous one, is concerned with 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.[7] 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 a discourse is impossible.[8] But of course, there are socially and historically determined differences between political discourse and a Henry James novel. We can certainly take a political position 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 for 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.[9]

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.[10] 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 among the most important contributions to the creation of literature as it is defined today.[11] Through a series of comparisons, I will argue that the implicit contract between a realist work and its reader differs from the contract established between other works written at the time.

In his novel “An American Tragedy,” T. Dreiser, without departing from the aforementioned plot, on the one hand, rejected the idea of the pursuit of easy happiness, the thirst for profit, and on the other hand, exposed the corruption of society, which causes and strengthens the desire of the average person to get rich by any means.

This concern, however, is not perfectly balanced. I rarely study specific cases of contract law in depth. Instead, I am interested in the importance that legal thinkers have given to contracts as a way of understanding social relations. Rather, I carefully examine selected literary texts. This imbalance undermines my training as a literary critic. I hope that this disciplinary bias will not discourage members of the legal profession from starting to read the book. The first two chapters are intended in part to interest readers. If they have not read all the literary works I will consider, they should not despair; nor have many literary critics.[11] I hope that my reading of literary works will enrich and perhaps transform legal scholars’ understanding of the legal history of the period. For those interested in the contract, the subtle sense of human activity expressed in realistic works must be particularly difficult. My

identification as a literary critic marks another difference between this work and my earlier work. When I began that book, I, like many others, was struggling to understand how to move literary studies beyond formalism. The advent of continental theory had successfully complicated the New Critical Readings, but that theory often seemed to produce a kind of formalism, while at the same time retreating from pressing social and political problems into the realm of textual studies, incomprehensible to those not versed in its special language. My work on law and literature was an attempt to move beyond formalism by connecting the study of literature with the important legal issues of antebellum America.

LIST OF REFERENCES:

1. Dreiser, T. (1912). *The Financier*. Harper & Brothers.
2. Kazin, A. (1965). *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature*. Harcourt, Brace & World.
3. Zassoursky, Ya. N. *Theodore Dreiser: Life and Work*. Moscow: Moscow University Press, 1977. 320 p.
4. Batalov, E. Ya. *Social Utopia and Utopian Consciousness in the USA*. Moscow: Nauka, 1982. 337 p.
5. Gilenson, B. A. *In Search of the "Other America": From the History of Progressive Literature in the USA*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1987. 315 p.
6. Fayziyeva Kamila (2019) "EVALUATION CATEGORY IN FOREIGN AND UZBEK LANGUAGES ACCORDING TO THEIR PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS," *Scientific Bulletin of Namangan State University*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 2, Article 189.

7. G.I. Muzaffarovich, Comparative Literature. – Bukhara: “Durdona”, 2023, 136 p.

8. INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE DRAMA OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND ABDURAUF FITRAT. G.I. Muzaffarovich, Journal of Education, Ethics and Value, 2025. https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=ru&user=ihOH1F0AAAAJ&citation_for_view=ihOH1F0AAAAJ:IjCSPb-OG4C

9. Fayziyeva, K. A. (2020). MODERN TRENDS IN THE HUMANITIES PEDAGOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES. Aktuální Pedagogika, (3), 11-12.

10. Mansurova, G. M., & Fayzieva, K. A. (2020). GENERAL CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION CATEGORY. Scientific Bulletin of Namangan State University, 2(8), 227-230.

11. Mansurova, G., & Fayzieva, K. (2019). EVALUATION CATEGORY IN FOREIGN AND UZBEK LANGUAGES ACCORDING TO THEIR PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS. EVALUATION, 5, 10-2019.