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Chapter 6: Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945)

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Considered by many as the leader of Naturalism in American writing, Dreiser is also remembered for his stinging criticism of the genteel tradition and of what Howells described as the "smiling aspects of life" typifying America. In his fiction, Dreiser deals with social problems and with characters who struggle to survive. His sympathetic treatment of a "morally loose" woman in *Sister Carrie* was called immoral and he suffered at the hands of publishers. One of Dreiser's favorite fictional devices was the use of contrast between the rich and the poor, the urbane and the unsophisticated, and the power brokers and the helpless. While he wrote about "raw" experiences of life in his earlier works, in his later writing he considered the impact of economic society on the lives of people in the remarkable trilogy - *The Financier*, *The Titan*, and *The Stoic*. His best known work is *An American Tragedy* which shows a young man trying to succeed in a materialistic society.

Primary Works

Sister Carrie, 1900; *Jennie Gerhardt*, 1911; *The Financier*, 1912; *A Traveler at Forty*, 1913; *The Titan*, 1914; *The Genius*, 1915; *A Hoosier Holiday*, 1916; *Free and Other Stories*, 1918; *Twelve Men*, 1919; *A Book About Myself*, 1922; *The Color of a Great City*, 1923; *An American Tragedy*, 1925; *Moods*, 1926; "Typhoon," (short story), 1926; *Chains*, 1927; *Dreiser Looks at Russia*, 1928; *A Gallery of Women*, 1929; *Dawn*, 1931; *The Bulwark*, 1946; *The Stoic*, 1947.

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