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**NATURALIZM VA ISTE'MOLCHI XOHISHI: TEODORE DRAYZER VA AMERIKA  
KAPITALIZM MADANIYATI****НАТУРАЛИЗМ И ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЬСКОЕ ЖЕЛАНИЕ: ТЕОДОР ДРАЙЗЕР И КУЛЬТУРА  
АМЕРИКАНСКОГО КАПИТАЛИЗМА****NATURALISM AND CONSUMER DESIRE: THEODORE DREISER AND THE CULTURE  
OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM****Nurbek Farmonov**

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**Annotatsiya**

Ushbu maqolada Teodor Drayzer asarlari tabiat bilan hamohangligi va Amerika jamiyatidagi iste'molchilik qarashlari singari ikki tomonlama nuqtayi nazar orqali ko'rib chiqiladi. Amerika adabiyotida naturalizmining ta'siri ulkan namoyandalardan biri bo'lgan Drayzer insonni atrof-muhit, irsiyat va ijtimoiy kuchlar tomonidan shakllantirilgan mavjudotlar sifatida tasvirlagan. Shu bilan birga, u asr boshlarida Amerikada iste'molchi kapitalizmining yuksalishini o'rganib chiqdi, ambitsiyalari va istaklari tovar va ijtimoiy muhit orqali shakllantirilgan xarakterlarni tasvirladi. Baxtiqaro Kerri (1900), Jenni Gerhardt (1911) va Amerika fojiasi (1925) romanlarining amaliy tadqiqotlari orqali bu maqola Drayzer naturalizmining determinizmini kulturalistik tanqid bilan qanday qilib birlashtirishini tahlil qiladi. Kerri Miberning Chikagoda jamiyat pillapoyalaridan ko'tarilishi, Jenni Gerhardtning jamiyat bilan munosabatlardagi chidamliligi va Klaid Griffitsning fojiali halokatini aks ettiradi. Drayzerning romanlari nafaqat naturalizmi, balki iste'molchi jamiyatining zamonaviy muammolarini ham oldindan aytib beradi, moddiy madaniyat va inson taqdiri o'rtasidagi ajralmas bog'liqlikni ko'rsatadi. Ushbu tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, Drayzerning ijodi bugungi kunga qadar Amerika kapitalizmining madaniy va ijtimoiy dinamikasini tushunish uchun tanqidiy ahamiyatga ega.

**Аннотация**

В этой статье рассматривается творчество Теодора Драйзера через призму натурализма и потребительства. Драйзер, один из самых влиятельных представителей американского натурализма, изображал людей как существ, сформированных окружающей средой, наследственностью и социальными факторами. В то же время он исследовал становление потребительского капитализма в Америке на рубеже веков, создавая персонажей, чьи амбиции и желания опосредовались товарами, социальной мобильностью и городским зрелищем. В статье анализируется, как Драйзер интегрирует натуралистический детерминизм с культурной критикой потребительской современности, посредством анализа произведений «Сестра Керри» (1900), «Дженни Герхардт» (1911) и «Американская трагедия» (1925). Восхождение Кэрри Мибер на фоне городского пейзажа Чикаго, стойкость Дженни Герхардт в условиях коммерциализированных отношений и трагическое падение Клайда Гриффитса демонстрируют, как потребительское желание усиливает натуралистические силы, опутывая людей сетями необходимости, классовых стремлений и моральной неоднозначности. Романы Драйзера не только служат примером натурализма, но и превосхищают современную критику потребительского общества, иллюстрируя неразрывную связь между материальной культурой и человеческой судьбой. В этом исследовании утверждается, что художественная литература Драйзера обеспечивает критическую основу для понимания культурной и социальной динамики американского капитализма, сохраняя при этом свою актуальность для изучения литературы и потребительской культуры.

**Abstract**

This article examines Theodore Dreiser's fiction through the dual lenses of naturalism and consumerism. Dreiser, one of the most influential figures in American literary naturalism, depicted human beings as creatures shaped by environment, heredity, and social forces. At the same time, he explored the rise of consumer capitalism in turn-of-the-century America, portraying characters whose ambitions and desires were mediated through commodities, social mobility, and urban spectacle. Through case studies of *Sister Carrie* (1900), *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), and *An American Tragedy* (1925), this article analyzes how Dreiser integrates naturalist determinism with a cultural critique of consumer modernity. Carrie Meeber's rise through the urban landscape of Chicago, Jennie Gerhardt's endurance amid commodified relationships, and Clyde Griffiths' tragic downfall highlight how consumer desire intensifies naturalist forces, entangling individuals in webs of necessity, class aspiration, and moral ambiguity. Dreiser's novels not only exemplify naturalism but also anticipate modern critiques of consumer society, illustrating the inextricable bond between material culture and human fate. This study argues that Dreiser's fiction provides a critical framework for understanding the

*cultural and social dynamics of American capitalism, with continued relevance for the study of literature and consumer culture today.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *naturalizm, iste'molchilik, ambitsiyalar, istaklar, ijtimoiy kuchlar.*

**Ключевые слова:** *натурализм, потребительство, амбиции, желания, социальные силы.*

**Key words:** *naturalism, consumerism, ambitions, desires, social forces.*

## INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twentieth century, American literature was marked by the emergence of naturalism as both a literary mode and philosophical outlook. Among its chief exponents was Theodore Dreiser, whose novels depict human beings as vulnerable to forces beyond their control: economic systems, biological drives, and social structures. Dreiser's naturalism diverged from the genteel realism of William Dean Howells and Henry James, emphasizing not refinement of style but a raw confrontation with life's necessities. Yet Dreiser's fiction also engages with another transformative phenomenon of the era: the rise of consumer capitalism. Department stores, advertising, and the expanding urban landscape offered new modes of aspiration, while simultaneously shaping individuals' desires and destinies. Dreiser, both journalist and novelist, was acutely attuned to the intersection of naturalist determinism and consumer culture.

This article investigates Dreiser's fiction through the dual frameworks of naturalism and consumerism. It argues that his portrayals of characters such as Carrie Meeber, Jennie Gerhardt, and Clyde Griffiths dramatize how consumer desire becomes a determining force in human fate, intensifying the naturalist emphasis on environment and circumstance. By situating Dreiser within both literary naturalism and the cultural history of consumer capitalism, the study illuminates his distinctive contribution to American literary modernity.

Naturalism as a literary mode, rooted in the influence of Émile Zola, emphasized the deterministic role of heredity and environment in shaping human behavior. In contrast to realism's focus on everyday life and moral choice, naturalism presented characters as subject to forces beyond their conscious control. Dreiser's works exemplify this philosophical determinism. As Donald Pizer (1991) observes, "Crane, Norris and Dreiser depict contemporary middle- and lower-class life free from superficial notions of the ideal and supernatural as controlling forces in experience, and they too find man limited by the violent and irrational within himself and by the oppressive restrictions within society." [5: 5]. Their characters often aspire to better lives, but their ambitions collide with social and economic forces that circumscribe possibility.

Dreiser's naturalism was informed by his personal background as the son of impoverished German immigrants. His early experience of deprivation instilled a fascination with both poverty and wealth, failure and success. As Jerome Loving (2005) notes, Dreiser's fiction consistently "reflects more than the basic determinism he would dramatize in his novels; it also suggests his growing ambivalence regarding a benign deity" [3: 107]. Yet unlike some European naturalists, Dreiser infused his narratives with a peculiarly American preoccupation: the pursuit of upward mobility in a society which is increasingly defined by consumerism.

## LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the consolidation of consumer capitalism in the United States. The rise of department stores, advertising, and new forms of mass entertainment created what historian William Leach (1993) calls "the land of desire," a cultural order in which commodities became central to self-definition [1: 15]. Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) analyzed conspicuous consumption as a marker of social status, illuminating the ways in which consumer goods signified aspiration and identity. Dreiser's fiction reflects this cultural context: his characters' ambitions are frequently articulated through clothing, housing, and material possessions.

As Richard Lingeman (1990) argues, Dreiser was fascinated by "the interplay between material desire and social fate" [2: 418]. His novels depict the modern city as both opportunity and trap, a space where consumer desire can propel characters toward success or ruin. In this sense, Dreiser extends naturalism into the realm of consumer culture, portraying human beings as determined not only by biological and social forces but also by the lure of commodities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## ADABIYOTSHUNOSLIK

Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is one of the most deep study of people's desire in American literature. The main character, Carrie Meeber, arriving in Chicago, is admired by the allure of fashion, theater, and other opportunities in the city. As Pizer (1982) remarks, "Carrie's story is not merely one of sexual or social mobility but of consumer initiation, her rise dependent upon the commodities that symbolize her transformation" [6: 74]. Carrie lives first with Drouet and later with Hurstwood, her relationships with her lovers opening up opportunities for a better life, such as access to clothing, housing, and cultural capital. A new phase of consumer opportunities emerges in her life.

Hurstwood is a successful man, he runs one of the most popular bars in the city. But his life begins to decline: once a successful manager, after meeting Carrie, he loses his family, his job, his position, and his inability to adapt to the dynamics of the city leads to his downfall. Dreiser juxtaposes Carrie's entry into the cyborg circle of society with Hurstwood's decline in his work, depicting a naturalistic theme of fate closely intertwined with consumer society. The novel ends with Carrie becoming materially successful but emotionally alienated, suggesting that consumer desires are ultimately unfulfilled. As Ellen Moers (1960) noted, Dreiser depicts the modern city as "a stage of endless desire, where satisfaction is perpetually deferred" [4: 98].

When the author describes Jenny from Lester's perspective, he individualizes her. Jenny is different from the wealthy women who are representatives of the noble class, and from the poor women who are the children of workers and servants. She is the woman of Lester's heart - kind, generous, beautiful and young. All aspects of Jenny correspond to Lester's desires and tastes, and his life has not been filled with the woman of his heart. The difference between Lester and Senator Brander is that he sees Jenny as a means of entertainment. His position and family members were against his marrying a girl from a poor and lower-class family. He did not want to give up his freedom, and he did not even think of marrying her. Jenny, a working woman, becomes the mistress of wealthy men, who provide her with financial stability but erode her autonomy. As Lingeman (1990) notes, "Jennie's endurance becomes a form of tragic resistance to a world in which women are valued primarily as objects of exchange" (2: 222).

In contrast to Carrie's active pursuit of consumer goods, Jennie embodies passive endurance [7: 141, 10: 15]. Her sacrifices highlight the gendered dimension of consumer culture, in which women's bodies become commodities within patriarchal and economic systems. Dreiser's naturalism intensifies the tragedy: Jennie's fate is not the product of individual moral failure but of systemic inequality, exacerbated by the commodifying logic of consumer society.

*An American Tragedy* offers Dreiser's most devastating critique of consumer desire. Clyde Griffiths, born into poverty, yearns for upward mobility and is enthralled by the symbols of wealth: clothing, leisure, and social distinction. As Trilling (1950) observed, Clyde is "a man intoxicated by the promise of consumer abundance, his every act measured by the commodities that signify success" [8: 227].

Clyde's relationships dramatize the destructive force of consumer aspiration. Roberta Alden, a factory worker he impregnates, embodies his entrapment in necessity, while Sondra Finchley represents the world of wealth and consumer privilege he covets. The tension between these women drives Clyde toward murder, his crime rooted less in personal malice than in the deterministic pressures of ambition and consumer desire. Dreiser portrays Clyde as both culpable and victim, undone by forces larger than himself. The novel thus epitomizes Dreiser's fusion of naturalist determinism with consumer culture critique.

Taken together, *Sister Carrie*, *Jennie Gerhardt*, and *An American Tragedy* reveal Dreiser's sustained engagement with consumer culture as a determinant of human fate. Carrie's rise, Jennie's endurance, and Clyde's downfall illustrate different facets of consumerism: aspiration, commodification, and ambition. Across these texts, Dreiser integrates naturalist determinism with a cultural analysis of capitalism, portraying consumer desire as both opportunity and trap.

Dreiser's fiction thus anticipates later critiques of consumer society, from Veblen's analysis of conspicuous consumption to twentieth-century cultural studies of advertising and commodity fetishism. His novels highlight the inextricable link between material culture and human aspiration, illustrating how consumer desire intensifies the naturalist forces of environment, necessity, and social fate.

### CONCLUSION

Theodore Dreiser's fiction stands at the crossroads of naturalism and consumerism. His novels dramatize how human beings, subject to deterministic forces of heredity and environment, are also shaped by the pervasive lure of commodities and consumer aspiration. *Carrie Meeber*, *Jennie Gerhardt*, and *Clyde Griffiths* exemplify the entanglement of desire and necessity, their fates illustrating the costs of consumer modernity. By integrating naturalist philosophy with cultural critique, Dreiser created a body of work that illuminates the dynamics of American capitalism. His novels remain vital not only for the study of American naturalism but also for understanding the cultural logic of consumerism that continues to shape modern society.

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