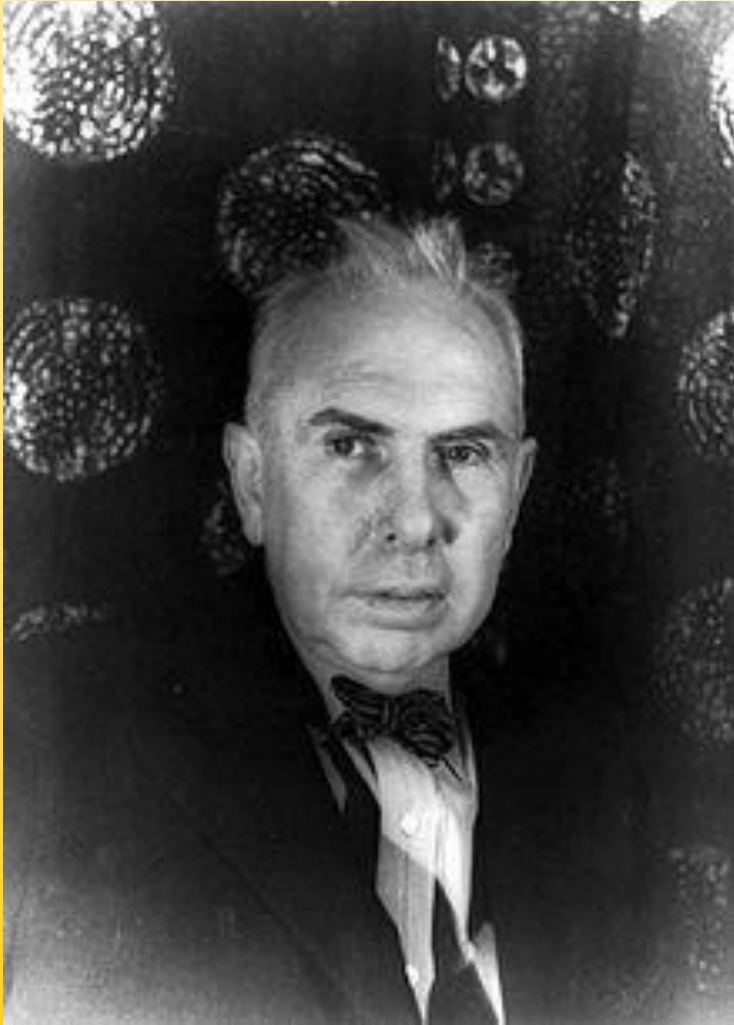




Theodore Dreiser

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Theodore Dreiser is a famous American writer and publicist. He was born in 1871 in the state of Indiana. He was the 12th child in the family.

Theodore's family



His family was poor, and his childhood was blighted by misery and humiliation. His father was a religious bigot. The family moved constantly from town to town but Theodore Dreiser spent most of his childhood in Warshaw, Indiana, where he attended public school. Later his teacher enabled him to go for one year (1888-1889) to the Indiana University, which he had to leave because of money difficulties.

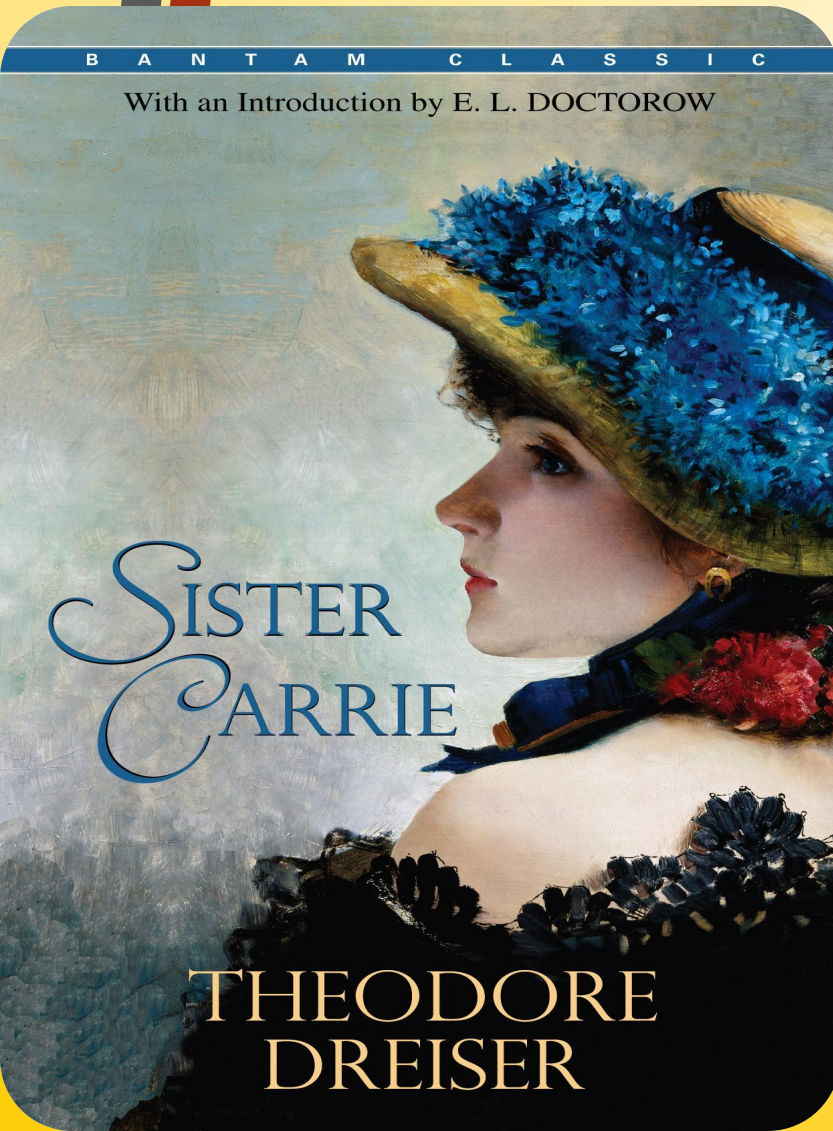
Theodore's family



Theodore's way of life

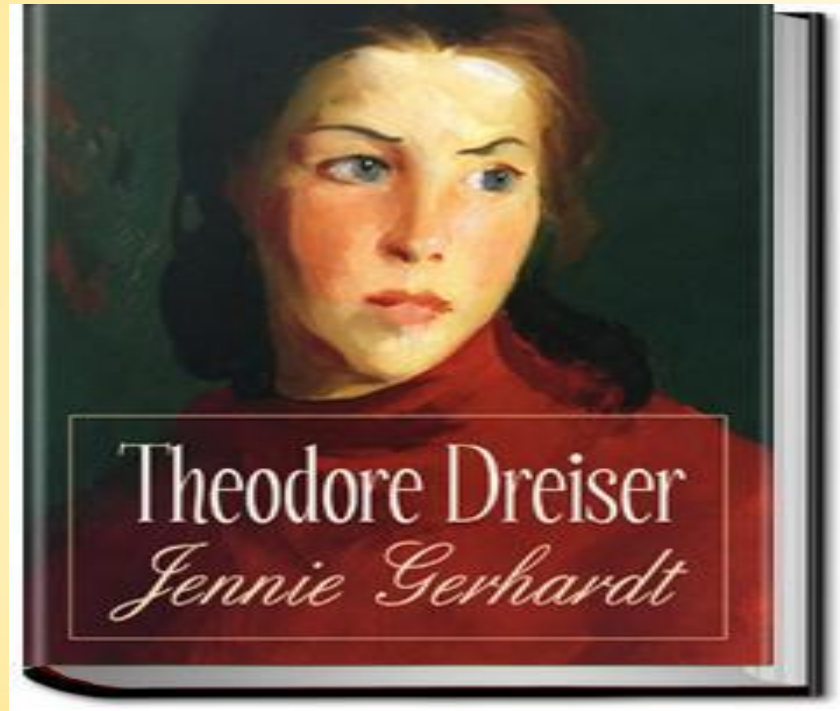
He moved to Chicago, where he supported himself by doing odd jobs. Working in an estate office, in a laundry and as a rent collector for a wholesale furniture company, he had the possibility to store up impressions which later appeared in his novels. 1892 Dreiser turned to journalism working as a newspaper reporter and editor in Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland and Pittsburg. Then he moved to New York, where he attained work as a magazine editor.

Dreiser's first significant novel

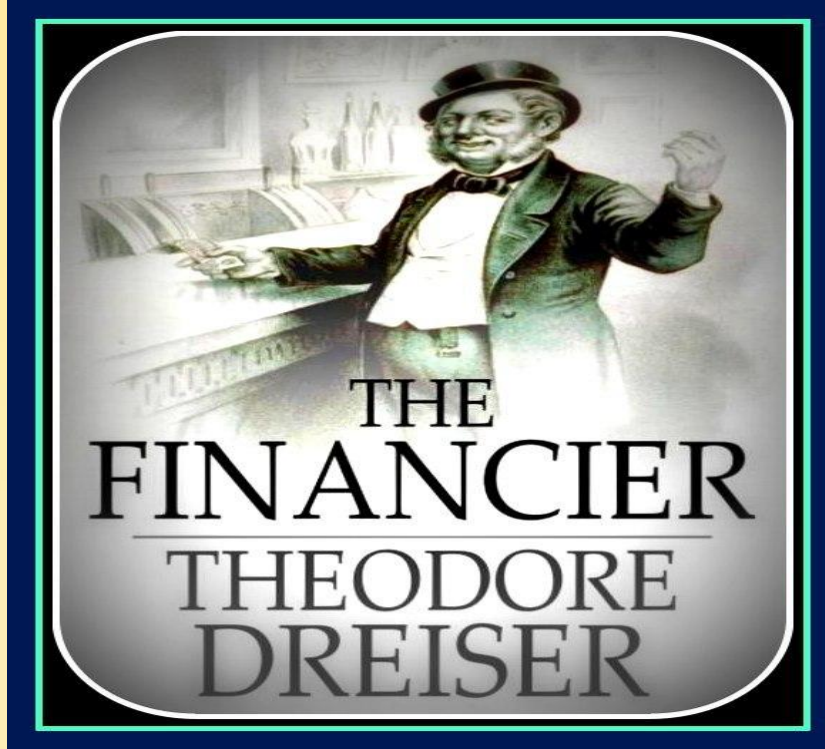


First significant work by Dreiser was his novel *Sister Carrie* (1900). This novel is a study of Carrie Meeber, an innocent Wisconsin girl, who comes to Chicago to find work and falls into an intricate network of temptation. The book, being realistic and true, mercilessly exposed bourgeois society. Hardly had the book appeared when it was pronounced immoral and withdrawn. Dreiser started his long fight against censorship and for the right of the novelist to present life as he saw it.

Dreiser's second novel



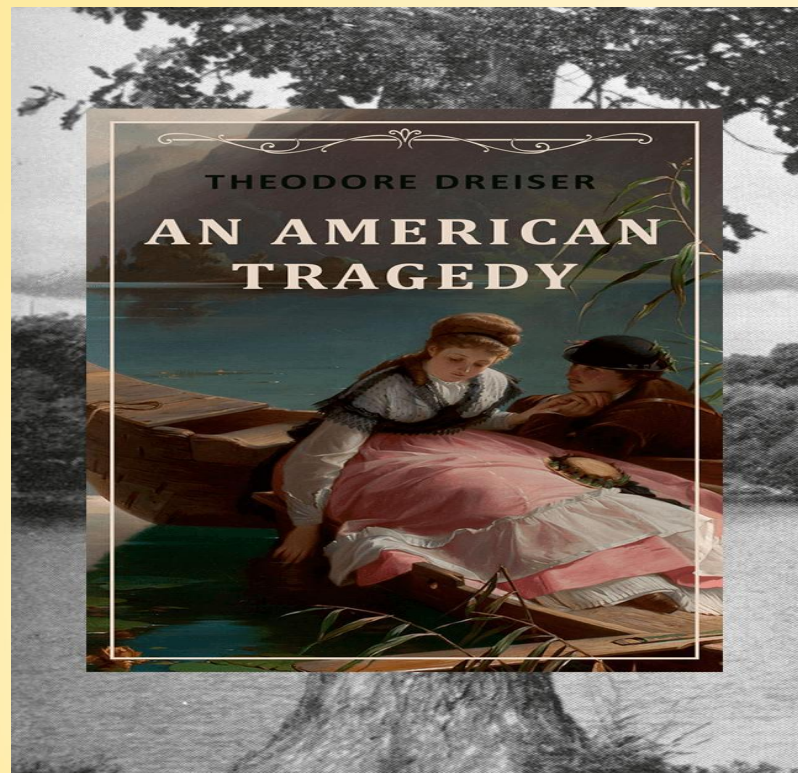
Ten years later, in 1911, Dreiser's second novel *Jennie Gerhardt* was published. Like *Sister Carrie* this novel was a challenge to the moral claims of the American bourgeoisie. The publishing of *Jennie Gerhardt* roused further storm of criticism from readers and publishers who declared it immoral.



Financier (1912) and The Titan (1914) together with The Stoic (published posthumously in 1947) form The Trilogy of Desire, a complete life story of an American capitalist, showing the unscrupulousness of the big capitalists. These three novels are the most highly documented and detailed of Dreiser's works; they are also interesting as a panoramic picture of the industrial triumph at the end of the XIX century in America.



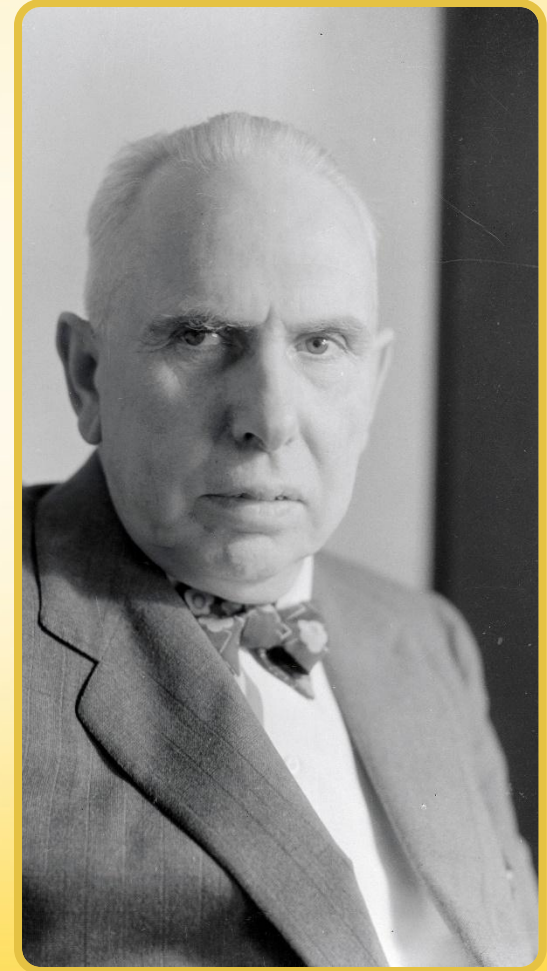
Dreiser gradually overcame the crises and reached a higher stage of realism.'s other most popular works besides the already mentioned include: Free and Other Stories (1918), A Book about Myself (1922), The Color of a Great City (1923), A Gallery of Women (1929), America is Worth Saving (1941), The Bulwark (1946).



American Tragedy. This novel may be regarded as the climax of Dreiser's literary career. The plot of the novel is partly based on court records of an actual trial. But although the bare details are thus borrowed from reality, the implications and moral conclusions of the story are Dreiser's own. Novel is a criticism of the "American Dream" - the unlimited opportunity and quick success in a new country, where social barriers are flexible. The novel is a study of social classes and of an individual's effort to rise from one into another; it involves also a moral analysis of guilt in the manner of Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment

Conclusion

Theodore Dreiser's works certainly display the true reality and deep understanding of the American life. Dreiser – as long as he belonged to the American naturalistic movement - was not afraid to picture the lives of men and women, their desires and passion; all his characters are portrayed as those who are blinded by the force of money and fame, the opportunities of life and the ways of its achievement.





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