

Eros and Thanatos in Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy

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Abstract

Theodore Dreiser is a renowned American journalist and novelist who is closely associated with the Naturalism literary movement. His works reflect the socio-economic challenges of his time, portraying characters who wrestle with inner conflicts, unconscious desires, and moral dilemmas evocative of Freudian ideas. Dreiser's exploration of his characters' psychological complexities underscores the influence of innate biological drives, like libido and aggressive instincts, in shaping and understanding human nature and actions. This study deals with the interplay between Eros and Thanatos, as theorized by Sigmund Freud, in Theodore Dreiser's novel "An American Tragedy"(1925). Based on Freud's theory of life and death instincts, the analysis investigates the protagonist, Clyde Griffiths' psyche and his turbulent journey towards self-destruction. Eros, symbolizing the life instinct, is evident in Clyde's pursuit of desires, mainly his yearning for wealth, social advancement and love. However, Thanatos, representing the death instinct, lurks beneath the surface, driving Clyde towards destructive behaviours and ultimately leading to his downfall. Through intricate character analysis and close examination of key events in the novel, this paper explains, utilizing a descriptive-analytical method, Dreiser's adept incorporation of Freudian concepts into the narrative, shedding light on the complex motivations and inner conflicts of the protagonist. Eventually, the exploration of Eros and Thanatos in "An American Tragedy" offers profound insights into human nature, desire, and the eternal struggle between life and death instincts.

Keywords: *desire, struggle, Eros, Thanatos, Id, Ego, Superego, life and death instincts, Clyde.*

1. Introduction

Since the early days of human civilization, philosophers have sought to understand the motivations driving human actions, resulting in diverse motivational theories. One such theory is the Instinct Theory of Motivation, defined as "an innate unlearned tendency or impulse which is fixed and unchanging and shared by all the members of a species" (Statt, 1998, p.73). According to this theory, organisms possess unique biological energies and tendencies crucial for survival. These are not learned behaviours but inherent, goal-directed patterns universally recurring across the species. The theory suggests that common motivations, such as hunger, thirst, sex, fear, and anger, are shared by all humans due to the universal nature of these biological instincts. The term "instinct" gained popularity in the 1870s with Wilhelm Wundt, who established the first psychology laboratory, marking the beginning of psychology as an independent discipline. The application of scientific methods during this period led to more precise definitions of terminologies, with most repetitive activities considered instinctual by the end of the nineteenth century (Sincero, 2012). Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), a prominent modern psychologist, developed the theory of instinct, attributing all human behaviours to impulses or instincts. In his work "Three Essays on Sexuality," Freud defined instinct as "the psychical representative of an endosomatic, continuously flowing source of stimulation as contrasted with a 'stimulus,' which is set up by single excitations coming from without. The concept of instinct is thus one of those lying on the frontier between the mental and the physical" (1905/1949, p.168). This suggests that an instinct is the mental outcome of an internal stimulus persistently propelling the mind in all of its activities.

Freud's early classification of instincts included the sexual drive (libido) and the ego instinct (self-preservation). Freud initially viewed libido as mainly sexual and pleasure-seeking, operating within the pleasure principle in the id. He explored the conflict between ego and sexual instincts, highlighting the dual function within individuals, stating, "While the ego instinct directs its libidinal cathexis to the subject's own self (ego-libido), the energy of sexual instinct is outwardly directed towards a sexual object" (1914/1925, pp. 75-76). This traditional psychoanalytic paradigm did not treat death or aggression as distinct components but rather acknowledged them as elements existing within a framework predominantly characterized by libido.

Freud emphasized the significance of sexual urges in human existence, asserting that libido is present in children from birth in his work "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905/1949). He introduced the concept of primary narcissism, where the ego is the initial object of libidinal cathexis, later shifting to external objects, stating, "Thus we form the idea of there being an original

libidinal cathexis of the ego from which some is later given off to objects, but which fundamentally persists and is related to the object cathexes, much as the body of an amoeba is related to the pseudopodia which it puts out" (1914/1925, pp. 75-76). Freud's evolving concept of libido include the idea of its shift from an object to an ego, termed "secondary narcissism" (Rothgeb, 1971, pp. 100-101). Following World War, Freud underwent a substantial theoretical transformation, influenced by personal traumas and clinical observations. In his seminal work, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), Freud not only challenged the dominance of the pleasure principle but also recognized the incorporation of ego instincts into sexuality. Emphasizing the idea that "we shall find courage to assume that there really does exist in the mind a compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle" (1920/1961, pp.16-17), Freud introduced the concept of the death instinct, Thanatos. This instinct seeks the dissolution of units, as Freud articulated, "I drew the conclusion that besides the drive to preserve living substance...there must exist another, contrary instinct seeking to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their *primaeval*, inorganic state" (1930/1961, p.118). This marked a conceptual shift introducing Thanatos as the antithesis of Eros and symbolizing a transition from egoism to the annihilation of unities—a manifestation of the death drive's inclination for dissolution.

The death instinct, defined by Satt (1998) as an "unconscious drive towards constriction of the personality, destructiveness, and death" (p.35), manifests both internally and externally, leading to self-destructive behaviours and negative external activities such as murder, war, and aggression. Freud (1920/1961) posits that death instincts are inherent in life, emphasizing that "Everything living dies for internal reasons" (p. 32). Death is portrayed as an instinctive quality and an uncontrollable force originating from within the psyche, with the unconscious or the ego identified as the responsible agent. This process allows the mind the freedom to "follow its own path to death" (p. 33), resulting in a return to a primordial, undifferentiated, and quiescent inorganic state (Mill, 2006, p.379).

The refined conceptualization emphasizes a clear duality between life instincts (Eros) and death instincts (Thanatos). The updated theory underlines the distinct goals: "The aim of Eros is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them. The aim of the death instincts, on the other hand (allied to the ego instinct), is to regress to a previous state, to undo connections and to lead what is living into an inorganic state" (Friedrich, 2019, p.28). Freud's perspective underscores the delicate equilibrium needed between life and death instincts for optimal mental health. This dynamic interplay, when appropriately managed, contributes to a well-adjusted and adaptive personality, while an imbalance can lead to a range of psychological challenges and disturbances.

Hence, in alignment with Sigmund Freud's classification positing that all individuals are driven by the interplay of the life instinct and the death instinct,

the researcher categorizes the instincts of Clyde Griffiths, the central character in Theodore Dreiser's "An American Tragedy." This classification suggests that Clyde's personality is steered by the dynamic interaction between these opposing motivational forces. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, each category is further subdivided into sections, delving into the multifaceted manifestations of Clyde's life instinct and death instinct. Accordingly, the researcher analyzes and explains the various forms of each instinct, relating them to other concepts within the most well-known branches of psychoanalysis, such as the Id, Ego, and Superego. Finally, the study underscores the profound impact of these instincts on shaping Clyde's personality, which is evident in his actions and behaviours.

Instincts in shaping Clyde's personality, as evidenced by his actions and behaviours.

Clyde's Life Instinct (Eros) 2.

Freud's articulation of the life instinct encompasses a range of libidinal desires originating from the id, operative from the earliest stages of an individual's existence. This instinct holds great importance as it drives actions aimed at ensuring individual survival and perpetuating the species. Instances of life instincts span the sex instinct, alongside its derivatives such as love, desire, and responses to fundamental innate drives like hunger and thirst, which are essential for life maintenance and prolongation. This section examines the influence of the two primary manifestations of life instinct on Clyde's behavioural patterns and actions.

2.1. Desire for Wealth and Social Position (Desire to Maintain Life)

According to Freud's theory of personality (1923), the human psyche is structured into three interdependent parts: the id, ego, and superego. The id, driven by the pleasure principle, represents emotional instincts seeking immediate gratification. The superego opposes the id, adhering to morality and perfection principles. The ego acts as a mediator, employing order and logic to satisfy the desires of the id in socially acceptable ways. A balanced interaction among these components results in a healthy personality, while an imbalance may lead to complex behaviour, frustration, anxiety, or neurosis. By applying Freud's tripartite theory to Clyde, the analysis considers his desire for material success and social acceptance as components of his id and fundamental expressions of his life instinct.

The novel begins in the bustling commercial district of Kansas City, where the Griffiths, a family of street preachers, deliver a sermon. Clyde Griffiths, their son and central figure, is disinterested in religion and feels ashamed of his impoverished family. Despite his father's dedication to spirituality, they struggle

financially. Clyde, a twelve-year-old boy, is intelligent and conscious of people's disapproval of his parents' work. He yearns for a more prosperous life, as depicted when he observes the world around him: "The handsome automobiles that sped by... troubled him with a sense of something different, better, more beautiful than his, or rather their life" (Dreiser, 2002, p.16).

Clyde is discontented with his family's financial struggles and their reliance on evangelical missions. He blames his family's religious beliefs for depriving him of a better lifestyle, causing him to feel humiliated. Hearing stories about his wealthy uncle Samuel Griffiths, who runs a prosperous business in Lycurgus, fuels Clyde's imagination of opulence in the East compared to his family's poverty in the West. Proud of his successful uncle, Clyde sees him as a symbol of the American Dream, emphasizing hard work and self-reliance. Inspired by his uncle's success and social status, Clyde aspires to emulate him.

According to Freud (1923), the id, inherited at birth, represents the unconscious, housing the basic disorganized drives determining human actions. Similarly, Clyde's life is heavily influenced by his id, evident early on as desire propels him. He yearns for possessions he lacks, expressing, "Oh, the fine clothes, the handsome homes, the watches, rings, pins that some boys sported; the dandies many youths of his years already were! And he had nothing. And he never had had" (Dreiser, 2002, p.29). Caught between his parents' spiritual lifestyle and his desire for material wealth, Clyde constantly envisions improving his life. He daydreams about others' lives, aspiring to achieve the goals highlighted by the American Dream in terms of social standing and wealth. However, Clyde recognizes that societal success requires a high level of proficiency, and due to his family's unsettled living conditions and frequent travel, he receives an inadequate education from a young age.

In contrast to wealthy children, Clyde's parents failed to recognize his abilities and interests, leaving him unprepared for any occupation. The narrator emphasizes this, stating, "For at fifteen, and even a little earlier, Clyde began to understand that his education, as well as his sisters' and brother's, had been sadly neglected" (Dreiser, 2002, p.13). Due to this deficient educational and professional background, Clyde struggles to develop his superego appropriately. The superego, rooted in internalized principles from parents and society, cannot thrive in such circumstances. Consequently, Clyde's ill-prepared superego struggles to resist the insatiable desires of the id.

On the other side, Clyde's sister, weary of her parent's financial struggles, escapes their circumstances by eloping with a travelling actor. Seduced by dreams of love, social mobility, and worldly pleasures, she envisions a life with new and better clothes, delicious adventures, and unconditional love, expressing, "She was to have new and better clothes than she had ever known, delicious adventures, love.

She would travel with him and see the great world. She would never need to trouble more about anything save him" (Dreiser, 2002, p.32-33).

Motivated by his sister, Esta's elopement, Clyde sets out on a quest for the American Dream, seeking societal approval and material luxuries. Securing a job as a soda water clerk in a drug store frequented by actors and theatregoers, Clyde sees this as a step towards personal independence. The job also brings unexpected perks, offering Clyde the chance to indulge in a long-desired pleasure: "For one thing, it would provide him, as he suspected, with all the ice-cream sodas he desired, free—an advantage not to be disregarded" (p.42). Clyde's newfound experience, particularly the satisfaction of having free ice cream, taps into his suppressed desires from childhood. According to Freud, repression is a defence mechanism that keeps undesirable thoughts in the unconscious to prevent stress or anxiety (Cramer, 2015). Clyde's desire for ice cream, repressed due to conflicting id impulses and societal expectations, resurfaces as he seeks satisfaction in his pursuit of personal gratification and independence.

Dissatisfied with his soda fountain job, Clyde becomes a bellhop at the Hotel Green-Davidson in Kansas City. Observing the opulent lifestyle of the wealthy, he deludes himself into thinking that materialism is the key to achieving his desires and entering their glamorous world: "Such grandeur. This, then, most certainly was what it meant to be rich, to be a person of consequence in the world—to have money" (p.71). Raised in a deprived, religious home, Clyde, driven by unmet desires, succumbs to internal and external temptations. Now free from parental control, he is motivated by his id: "And so starved had been Clyde's life up to this time and so eager was he for almost any form of pleasure, that from the first he listened with all too eager ears to any account of anything that spelt adventure or pleasure" (p.83). In line with the naturalist literary style, Dreiser presents a character ensnared in a world shaped by unpredictable forces, as noted by Donald Pizer: "The naturalist often describes his characters as though they are conditioned and controlled by environment, heredity, instinct, or chance" (1984, p. 13).

In his bellhop role, Clyde, enticed by wealth, manipulates his finances, deceiving his mother to satisfy personal desires and impress Hortense Briggs. Engaging in hedonistic activities with fellow bellhops, he adopts an upper-class lifestyle marked by indulgence. However, entering a new brothel triggers contemplation about societal standards and potential health risks, reflecting conflict with his upbringing; "Had he not better excuse himself... the most dreadful of diseases were occasionally contracted in just such places... He could hear his mother lecturing concerning all this—yet with scarcely any direct knowledge of any kind" (p.94). Nevertheless, Clyde's underdeveloped superego, shaped by a strict religious environment, fails to curb his unrestrained id-driven desires due to a

dysfunctional upbringing, poverty, and limited education, rendering him powerless against insatiable cravings.

The first book ends with Clyde fleeing a fatal accident, attributed by Freud's theory to the id's aversion to imprisonment and the innate drive to preserve life. The second book sees Clyde working in Chicago under a false identity guided by the superego, which has controlled his id for three years after the Kansas City incident. This compels him to strictly follow the law to evade detection. In essence, Clyde experiences a temporary state of equilibrium due to the balanced influence of the id, ego, and superego in his mind.

Despite this balance, the superego still influences Clyde. He displays a connection to the family by sending them money and expresses remorse in a letter to his mother: "Think of all the trouble I have caused you! And just at the time when you most needed me. Gee! Mother, I hope you can forgive me. Can you?" (pp.240-241). Freud's theory posits that an individual's id, without regard for moral agency, results in feelings of guilt. Working in Chicago as a bellhop, Clyde strives for American success and social status through diligent work, building connections, and behaving commendably. He encounters his uncle, Samuel Griffiths, who presents him with an opportunity to work at the family factory.

Clyde agrees to his uncle's invitation to Lyncurgus and starts working at the family factory from the very bottom up. Initially aware of the stark contrast between his poverty and the wealth in Lyncurgus, he realizes the rigid class system and hierarchy: "The lines of demarcation and stratification between the rich and the poor in Lyncurgus were as sharp as though cut by a knife or divided by a high wall" (p.369). This exposes the paradox of American aspiration, where equal possibilities coexist with a societal structure that preserves wealth and poverty. Dreiser uses the symbol of a "wall" to emphasize this divide, portraying the manufacturing building as surrounded by "high red walls," resembling a jail. Ironically, for Clyde, these walls signify "energy and very material success, a type of success that was almost without flaw, as he saw it" (p. 265).

Living in a boardinghouse with low-paying jobs, Clyde feels the urge to rise in society. His weak superego prevents him from the lasting mental peace he experienced in Chicago. Instead, his instinctive desires to enter the world of the affluent and renowned reappear, stimulating his id. In an effort to access wealth and move up the social ladder, Clyde as a simple worker in a factory, tries to connect with the upper class through clothing and appearance. He criticizes his coworkers for their simple working attire, believing that, "their spare and practical manner of dressing struck dead at one blow any thought of refinement in connection with the work here" (p.275). He feels superior to them due to his family's connection. Moreover, he avoids socializing with his boarders and buys new clothes to make himself appear superior outside the factory. Clyde's belief in

dressings extravagantly to attract the affluent is confirmed when the Griffiths swiftly approve of his appearance upon a dinner invitation. Despite financial challenges and a factory job, Clyde's polished look impresses them, leading him to consistently maintain it. This positive impression helps Clyde persuade his uncle that he is part of the Griffiths family, as Mr Griffiths states, "There must be some little place in one of the departments where he can be fitted in as the head of something [...] and where he can wear a decent suit of clothing" (p.335). Clyde achieves a higher position, temporarily fulfilling his desires for material possessions and social status.

Following his new promotion in his uncle's company as a factory supervisor, Clyde becomes more obsessed with wealth and material possessions. He initially falls in love with Roberta Alden, a lower-income woman who shares Clyde the same socioeconomic background and even: "somewhat after the fashion of Clyde about his family and his life, she too considered her life a great disappointment"(p.360). Clyde and Roberta view one another from different angles. Although Clyde saw Roberta as a sweet and devoted young woman, he also saw her as a factory girl he should never get married to: "For after all, who was she? A factory girl! The daughter of parents who lived and worked on a farm and one who was compelled to work for her living. Whereas he—he—if fortune would but favour him a little !"(p.446). Clyde believes that as a Griffith, he may aspire to someone more significant than Roberta who might help him in breaking into the wealthy class when chance is on his side. On the contrary, Roberta started "sensing the superior world in which she imagined he moved, and being so taken with the charm of his personality, was seized with the very virus of ambition and unrest that afflicted him"(p.369).

After months of dating, Clyde and Roberta build a strong bond. However, Clyde's fortunes take a turn when he encounters Sondra Finchley, who mistakes him for Gilbert. His fantasies and attraction to material comforts reach the peak and falls for Sondra as she "materialised and magnified for him the meaning of that upper class itself" (p. 475). Sondra, a wealthy figure representing success and high social status, initially uses Clyde to irritate Gilbert. However, she becomes drawn to him, assuming he will be a second Gilbert Griffiths, symbolizing wealth and power: "His clothes and his manner...seemed to indicate that he might be better placed than she had imagined" (p. 458). Despite warnings about Clyde's financial and social limitations, Sondra rationalizes, "After all [...] he was Bella's and Gilbert's cousin, and looked prosperous" (p. 454).

Eventually, Clyde becomes romantically involved with both Sondra and Roberta simultaneously. However, driven by ambition to enter the upper social class, Clyde intends to marry wealthy Sondra Finchley; therefore, he distances himself from poor Roberta, and fabricates reasons for his absences to spend time with Sondra. Consequently, struggling with conflicting moral obligations, Clyde's

weak ego fails to mediate between superego demands for Roberta and id impulses for Sondra, resulting in guilt and anxiety: "It might be disloyal, cruel, treacherous to Roberta, but was he not likely to meet Sondra?" (p. 489). Aware of betraying Roberta, Clyde rationalizes his negligence through defensive mechanisms: "Why should he care? He had never told her that he would marry her" (p. 545).

Clyde and Roberta end their relationship because of differing views on Roberta's appeal, however, Roberta discovers she's pregnant and chooses to get married. Clyde is discontented but remains determined to pursue Sondra, regardless of the circumstances he encounters with Roberta. He grapples with a psychological dilemma, torn between Sondra's desire for him to accompany her to parties and Roberta's demand for prompt marriage or public humiliation. Despite contemplating running away, his passion for Sondra and fear of losing her prevent him. Viewing Roberta as a threat to his id impulses for wealth and social advancement with Sondra, Clyde reflects: "She [Roberta] was, as he saw it in connection with his very vital dream of Sondra, making a mountain—an immense terror—out of a state that when all was said and done, was not so different from Esta's. And Esta had not compelled anyone to marry her" (p. 688). In his commitment to securing a prosperous union with Sondra, Clyde embarks upon a contemplative journey, pondering the potential necessity of getting rid of his pregnant sweetheart to prevent this perceived obstacle, symbolized by the metaphorical "mountain," from impeding his aspirations.

Consequently, Clyde's underdeveloped superego yields to instinctual demands, amplified by a weak ego incapable of reconciling conflicting id desires with reality. Motivated by an unwavering longing for social advancement, this ill-fated pursuit ends tragically with Roberta's murder. As a result, Clyde not only experiences the collapse of his aspirations but also anticipates the electric chair as punishment for submerging Roberta in Big Bittern Lake. His bleak destiny is determined by formidable forces that surpass his control or consciousness.

It is necessary to realize that Dreiser highlights instinctual and hereditary factors in characters' fates in "An American Tragedy," yet he acknowledges external and social variables. The allure of the American dream, materialistic societal values, and socioeconomic disparities among social classes contribute to the unfolding tragedy. Hence, Clyde, akin to other characters in Dreiser's works, grapples with the conflict between personal desires and societal limitations. His pursuit of success leads to a tragic downfall, causing profound anguish and distress. In a similar vein, Richard Gray notes that: "All Dreiser's major protagonists suffer from a need that their lives should assume dramatic form, and they suffer not so much because they cannot fulfil this need as because they do not understand it" (2004, p.364). Thus, Clyde's desire to become a member of the upper class was

unachievable in early 20th-century America due to his limited financial resources and lack of powerful connections.

It is undeniably accurate to assert that Clyde's misfortune is the tragedy of a single person, shaping Dreiser's consideration of naming the work "Mirage." However, studying 1920s murder cases compelled him to change the title to "An American Tragedy." Mrs Helen Dreiser affirms this, stating, "he (Dreiser) had been forced on his mind not only by the extreme American enthusiasm for wealth contrasted with American poverty but the determination of so many young Americans [...] to obtain wealth by marriage" (1955, pp. 71-72). This narrative tragedy becomes a documentary example symbolizing flaws within American culture, portraying a nationwide phenomenon.

In conclusion, Clyde's pursuit of life instincts, driven by an innate desire for affluence and societal status, transiently gratifies his id as evidenced by his employment and subsequent progression within his uncle's collar factory. However, the relentless nature of his instinctual quest for success, compounded by the underdeveloped nature of his superego and the incapacity of his weak ego to harmonize conflicting id impulses with the demands of reality, culminates not only in the collapse of his aspiration

ns but also precipitates his catastrophic demise.

2.2. Desire for Love and Sex

Freud's instinct theory asserts that life instinct is expressed through desires for survival, pleasure, reproduction, and related impulses, collectively contributing to individual well-being. This theoretical framework is exemplified in the novel's portrayal of Clyde, emphasizing his obsessive pursuit of various pleasures and insatiable craving for feminine beauty, particularly manifested in the pursuit of sexual gratification.

The narrative depicts Clyde's upbringing within a financially exploited and religiously constrained environment, where passion is deemed sinful. Despite the oppressive circumstances, Clyde's discontent grows, and his longing for aesthetic and feminine experiences intensifies. However, his trajectory towards a specific goal only crystallizes at the age of sixteen, coinciding with the emergence of his instinctual response to the opposite sex: "Incidentally by that time the sex lure or appeal had begun to manifest itself and he was already intensely interested and troubled by the beauty of the opposite sex, its attractions for him and his attraction for it" (Dreiser, 2000, p. 28). This pivotal development lays the foundation for Clyde's subsequent pursuit of sexual satisfaction.

Clyde's employment at a soda fountain near a renowned theatre exposes him to a cosmopolitan lifestyle and interactions with attractive women. Witnessing affluent young men enjoying pleasures with modern ladies activates his id, leading to persistent fantasies. Despite desiring a financially advantageous union,

the harsh realities of his impoverished family momentarily frustrate Clyde. He perceives material possession as crucial for romantic success: "No good-looking girl...would have anything to do with him if he did not possess this standard of equipment. It was necessary—the thing" (Dreiser, 2000, p.44). Faced with challenges, Clyde endeavours to secure a more lucrative job as a bellboy at the Green-Davidson Hotel.

Clyde's entry into a vibrant hotel environment, accompanied by a more generous salary, leads him to spend his earnings on indulging in brothels and the company of bar women to satisfy his sexual desires. However, his initial encounter with a whorehouse triggers a psychological disorder, vividly described by Dreiser:

All of a sudden he felt faint thrills of hot and cold racing up and down his back and all over him. His hands and face grew hot and then became moist—then his cheeks and forehead flamed. He could feel them. Strange, swift, enticing and yet disturbing thoughts raced in and out of his consciousness. His hair tingled and he saw pictures—bacchanalian scenes—which swiftly, and yet in vain, he sought to put out of his mind. They would keep coming back. And he wanted them to come back. Yet he did not (Dreiser, 2000, p.92).

This quote underscores the conflict between Clyde's id and ego, as his superego urges control over id impulses while the ego endeavours to reconcile opposing forces for a semblance of normalcy. Despite a strict religious upbringing, Clyde swiftly discards inhibitions, allowing the id to predominate. According to Freud's theory of personality (1923/1960), the id, driven by the pleasure principle, seeks immediate gratification without concern for consequences. Clyde grapples with controlling his desire for sensory stimulation, compelled by intuitive impulses conflicting with his religious upbringing.

Encouraged by his experiences at the brothel, Clyde actively seeks to find himself a girlfriend and grows closer to Ratterer, eventually meeting Hortense Briggs, a friend of Ratterer's sister. Clyde is immediately captivated by Hortense's sensuality and allure, unable to contemplate parting with her: "So captivated was he by this savour of sensuality and varieties that were about her, the stigmata of desire manifest in her gestures, moods, voice, the way she dressed, that he could not think of relinquishing her" (p.129). This intense infatuation leads Clyde to lose control over their relationship, fixating on Hortense and pursuing a sexual connection with her.

Despite Clyde's deep affection for Hortense, she manipulates him by using her sexual allure for expensive gifts, highlighting Clyde's relentless pursuit of satisfying the instinctual desires of his id for sex while avoiding discomfort. This is evident when he prioritizes buying a lavish fur coat for Hortense over helping his sister Esta, who faces a dire situation. Clyde experiences a psychological dilemma, torn between the id's carnal desire for Hortense and the moral obligation of his superego to assist Esta: "How terrible it was not to help her... He felt

strained and mean and incompetent under the circumstances" (Dreiser, 2000, p.178). Despite the dominance of the id in his actions, Clyde experiences a faint sense of guilt and self-blame for neglecting his mother's needs: "He suffered a pang of commingled self-commiseration and self-contempt... Might he not, later, be punished for a thing like this?" (p.178-179). Clyde is burdened by guilt for prioritizing spending on Hortense over his sister, acknowledging his selfishness. Avoiding familial responsibilities heightens his anxieties, making accountability challenging. Fearing consequences, he offers his mother five dollars to reconcile his id-driven desires with guilt, momentarily satisfying his instinctual urges through a rational compromise.

After a tranquil period following a car accident in Kansas City, Clyde's psychic equilibrium, which he used to experience in young adulthood, is disrupted at his uncle's collar factory in Lyncurg. Enthralled by the idea of a lavish lifestyle and aspiring for upward social mobility, he develops an attraction to feminine elegance. This shift leads to the resurgence of long-repressed sexual urges, resulting in passionate and uncontrollable encounters with attractive women. Clyde's initial lack of identity and confusion regarding his uncle's intentions prompt him to casually interact with Rita. However, upon receiving a delayed invitation from the socially prominent Griffiths, he quickly loses interest in Rita and Dillard, considering them socially inferior: "What! Mix with people so far below him—a Griffiths—in the social scale here and at the cost of endangering his connection with that important family. Never! It was a great mistake" (p.314). Following his first visit to the Griffiths' residence, Clyde becomes the manager of a department with exclusively female employees, but company regulations prohibit social interactions with them, leading to anxiety and psychological distress. Clyde copes through daydreams, such as a canoeing excursion where he fantasizes about a more refined lifestyle and romantic experiences: "He felt so out of it, so lonely and restless and tortured by all that he saw here, for everywhere that he looked he seemed to see love, romance, contentment" (p.379). This passage illustrates Clyde's suppressed desires and wishes for a different lifestyle, in line with Freud's notion that phantasies fulfil unsatisfied wishes: "The motive forces of phantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single phantasy is the fulfilment of a wish, a correlation of unsatisfying reality" (Freud, 1908, p.423). Frustrated by sexual repression and discontent in Lyncurg, Clyde succumbs to temptation, developing an attraction to Roberta Alden, a modest farm girl in his supervisory position.

Following his unsuccessful attempt to have a sexual relationship with Hortense, Clyde turns to Roberta as an alternative outlet for expressing his suppressed and unconscious desires. He fully succumbs to the overwhelming force of his libido, allowing his emotions and sexual cravings to dominate him. The strength of his sexual drive is so potent that his ego relinquishes control, becoming subservient

to his id, thereby permitting the realization of his long-suppressed dreams. Freud's analogy of a man on horseback illustrates the dynamic between the ego and id, emphasizing the ego's role in restraining the superior strength of the id: "[...] in its relation to the id it (the ego) is like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse; with this difference, that the rider tries to do so with his strength while the ego uses borrowed forces" (1923/1960, p. 19). The ego, as the guiding force for the id, typically ensures adherence to appropriate paths amidst the conflicting demands of the superego and reality. Unfortunately, in Clyde's situation, the ego is defeated, unable to find a compromise between the id and the external world. Without the influence of the ego, Clyde's id would roam freely, acting solely based on its desires.

In due course, Clyde engages in a secret affair with Roberta, momentarily satisfying his id with physical intimacy and leading to her pregnancy. Despite this, Clyde's sexual desires remain insatiable, driven by an unrestrained id that craves every form of feminine beauty and pleasure. As Clyde indulges in more encounters, his desires intensify. Dreiser's incorporation of personal experiences into the novel is notable, with scholar Mohammed Gouffi emphasizing the parallels between Dreiser and Clyde: "Theodore Dreiser himself experienced sexual desires and emotional yearnings for girls. He closely resembled his main character Clyde, who fantasized about sexual gratification and enjoyment" (Gouffi, 2012, p.68). This highlights the connection between Dreiser's own life and the character development of Clyde in the novel.

Clyde's interest in Roberta changes when he meets Sondra Finchley, the refined daughter of a prominent Lycurgus factory owner. Clyde's fascination with Sondra Finchley transforms his romantic pursuits, surpassing previous encounters. Dreiser vividly describes Sondra's effect on Clyde as "electric - thrilling - arousing," emphasizing the intense desire and longing she sparks within him (p.325). Captivated by Sondra's allure, Clyde holds her in high esteem, perceiving her as a divine being endowed with irresistible qualities.

As Clyde's bond with Sondra strengthens, he places her as his top priority despite the difficulties he faces with Roberta. He views his issues with Roberta as insignificant when compared to his captivating vision of a future with Sondra: "the dark situation in connection with Roberta seeming no more at moments than a dark cloud which shadowed this other (p.619). Shifting his focus towards marrying Sondra, Clyde envisions a joyful future with her at the centre of his ambitions. While Sondra genuinely cares for Clyde, their blossoming relationship may encounter complications due to Clyde's previous sexual involvement with Roberta, leading to a detailed examination of desire, societal expectations, and the complex nature of romantic pursuits in Clyde's evolving connections.

On the other hand, Roberta's fear intensifies as she contemplates societal judgment for her unwed pregnancy and considers facing her parents. This fear is

heightened by her rejection of Clyde's proposal her unsuccessful attempt to terminate her pregnancy and her decision to reject Clyde's proposal of eloping and raising their child independently with his financial support. Pressured by the societal stigma, she insists on marriage with Clyde, resorting to threats if he refuses. Clyde, torn between his moral obligations and his desires, grapples with the unbearable thought of leaving Sondra for Roberta, illustrating the conflict between his superego and id: "[...] the love and romance, gayety, position, power—he was going to give all that up and go away with and marry her. Sneak away to some out-of-the-way place! Oh, how horrible! And with a child at his age!" (p.631). Within Clyde's internal struggle, the desire for Sondra and the repulsion towards the sacrifices demanded by Roberta intensify. This conflict drives him to a dark plan inspired by a news article—a sinister plot to murder Roberta during a boating trip, highlighting the tragic consequences of Clyde's inner turmoil and moral degradation.

In conclusion, Clyde's story is a poignant examination of the clash between individual desires and societal restrictions. Driven by an insatiable id, Clyde succumbs to overpowering desires, challenging societal norms in a futile attempt to satisfy repressed wishes. This struggle leads to the tragic fate of both Clyde and Roberta. According to Donald Pizer, Clyde's tragedy can be concisely characterized as, "a seeker of sex and beauty destroyed by his own weaknesses and the flaws of the society he strives to conquer" (1976, p.24). The narrative underscores how personal limitations and societal norms act as formidable obstacles to Clyde's aspirations, thwarting his progress toward fulfilment.

3. The Death Instinct (Thanatos)

Freud's concept of the death instinct posits an inherent drive toward self-destruction within individuals, leading to behaviours that may harm oneself or others. Aggression becomes an outlet for expressing the death instinct, a response to internal conflicts between Eros and Thanatos. Freud (1920) suggests that the death instinct is present from birth but is typically restrained by the life instinct. However, in specific situations like frustration, anxiety, threat, or violence, the death instinct can become excessively active, manifesting as aggressive behaviour. This section explores the circumstances and factors contributing to Clyde's aggressive tendencies, ultimately resulting in the dominance of the death drive over his life instincts.

3.1. Desire for Aggression

Freud's theory (1923, 1930, 1933) posits aggression as a psychological expression of an inherent death drive, present universally and aiming to annihilate its target. Rooted in the unconscious, aggression arises from internal factors rather than

external influences. It becomes an inevitable aspect of human existence, responding to suppressed desires and conflicts within the psyche's dynamics of id, ego, and superego. Aggressive acts, spanning from physical violence to subtle hostility, are considered impossible to eliminate. Freud suggests that managing aggression involves redirecting it towards symbolic outlets for catharsis, preventing its uncontrolled manifestation.

Freud's death instinct significantly influences Clyde, the protagonist in Dreiser's "An American Tragedy." The inherent destructive urge in Freud's concept mirrors Clyde's internal struggles, contributing to the unfolding tragedy. As Clyde grapples with desires, conflicts, and societal pressures, the latent destructive tendencies associated with the death instinct manifest in his actions. Themes of self-sabotage and a compulsion to confront mortality align with Freud's conceptualization, adding complexity to Clyde's character and shaping the narrative trajectory.

From the outset of the novel, it is evident that Dreiser portrays his main character as a young child who is out of place in his environment. Clyde becomes conscious of his physical appearance, experiencing significant distress over not possessing the same level of handsomeness and elegance as his peers: "What a wretched thing it was to be born poor and not to have anyone to do anything for you!" (p.28). Clyde's dissatisfaction arises from a deep understanding of his position in society, which amplifies his feelings of inadequacy in comparison to the wealth and prosperity surrounding him. His longing for a more cultured existence grows stronger as he witnesses individuals who epitomize sophistication, but remain beyond his grasp. This yearning is further intensified by strained familial bonds and the challenges posed by societal norms.

Freud (1926/1959, p. 91) notes childhood's role in intensifying aggression, with lingering influences driving individuals toward fulfillment. Clyde's diagnosed mental depression, rooted in childhood, is revealed through symptoms: "[...] a kind of mental depression or melancholia which promised not so well for his future" (p.28). Social isolation due to parents' work intensifies loneliness, suggesting potential long-term consequences. Growing mental depression, stemming from suppressed desires, significantly impacts Clyde's well-being, shaping his life's trajectory. Clyde's family discord and lack of friendships contribute to his resistance to societal norms, manifesting as rebelliousness and occasional lethargy. In this context, Susan Kahn describes melancholia as "an open wound, a prolonged injury, even unending. Yet the melancholic could be described as comfortable in their position, his or her attack is focused on the lost object rather than on him or herself" (2016, p.32). This prolonged emotional state aligns with Clyde's actions, hinting at aggressive and potentially fatal consequences.

As the story unfolds, Clyde grapples with an intricate interplay between life and death instincts, navigating desires, societal expectations, and the repercussions of his decisions. Upon arriving in Lurgus, New York, his life instincts take the lead as he achieves some satisfaction of financial and sexual desires, driven by ambitions for wealth and social standing. Clyde's position in his uncle's business fulfils his life instincts, and he dreams of finding personal happiness and social advancement through marriage to the wealthy Sondra Finchley.

At the same time, his sexual desires are fulfilled in relationships, particularly with factory worker Roberta Alden. However, the emergence of the death instinct, as defined in Freudian psychology as a display of self-destructive tendencies and an unconscious longing for death or dissolution, begins to loom over Clyde's mind. Initially overshadowed by life instincts, the death instinct gains strength, eventually overpowering life instincts and influencing Clyde's actions and choices, especially after Roberta's pregnancy and her unsuccessful attempts to end it.

Clyde grapples with death instincts, extending beyond physical mortality to psychic threats triggered by Roberta's pregnancy. Internal turmoil arises, particularly in contemplating marriage as a solution: "All that he would see or feel was that this [marriage] meant the loss of everything to him...The loss of all his splendid dreams" (p.635). Sondra propels Clyde toward wealth and social standing, while Roberta's insistence on marriage threatens his ambitions, symbolizing a struggle akin to the clash between life and death instincts. The impending fatherhood signifies a life instinct, but Clyde's efforts to evade it contribute to a narrative leading towards a tragic resolution. Clyde's entrapment in his attraction to Sondra fosters resentment, evident in his lamentation: "Oh, why had he ever been so foolish and weak as to identify himself with her [Roberta] in this intimate way?" (p.631). Reflecting on a pre-Roberta period, Clyde laments violating societal norms, expressing internal conflict and guilt, ultimately shaping the narrative toward a tragic outcome.

Moreover, Clyde's evident desire for a different life, had he exercised patience, suggests a genuine longing for inner tranquillity. This yearning for an alternative path is emphasized as a deep desire unaffected by current remorse-inducing choices. Drawing from Freudian psychoanalytic theory, this longing aligns with the concept that "an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things" (1920/1961, p. 30). Following Freud's hypothesis, Clyde's contemplation reflects a subconscious drive within organic life to return to a state of unmodified tranquillity. Freud's idea of drives seeking the restoration of previous states resonates with Clyde's efforts to alleviate tension and discomfort resulting from impulsive actions.

Furthermore, Clyde grapples with heightened internal conflict as he receives persuasive letters from both Sondra and Roberta, presenting conflicting desires.

Sondra's charming invitation contrasts sharply with Roberta's urgent plea for marriage, leaving Clyde in a profound dilemma, expressed in his desperate query: "In God's name was there no way? No outlet from this horrible difficulty which now confronted him?" (p.644). Amidst this turmoil, Clyde comes across a news article about a drowning couple in Pass Lake, triggering a significant shift in his perspective. This tragedy prompts him to contemplate murder as a potential solution to the complexities arising from Roberta's pregnancy and Sondra's growing obsession.

In this context, Slunský proposes that the death instinct may emerge in two instances: first, when an individual has experienced immense joy temporarily and wants to sustain that moment forever, and second, when an obstacle obstructs their pursuit of happiness. In these situations, the life instinct has the potential to change into the death instinct, suggesting that Eros can, in specific circumstances, merge with Thanatos (Slunský, 2016, p. 9-10). In Clyde's case, the unintended pregnancy becomes a significant obstacle to his quest for a fulfilling life, potentially leading to self-destructive tendencies.

Clyde is deeply affected by the tragic drowning incident, which leads him to contemplate a radical solution to his problems. Dreiser skillfully employs Freudian psychology to intricately portray Clyde's descent into mental instability, illustrating the development of a murderous plan and the events that culminate in the tragic act at Big Bittern Lake, including the death of Roberta Alden. To enhance the plot and create distinctive literary effects, Dreiser incorporates unconventional narrative elements such as nightmarish dreams, a malevolent psychic genie, a supernatural setting, and an eerie "wier-wier" bird. Through this fusion of Freudian analysis and innovative storytelling techniques, Dreiser adeptly delves into the complex landscape of the murderer's psyche.

As the idea of planning an accidental murder enters Clyde's consciousness, conflicting emotions and moral dilemmas overwhelm him. Dreiser captures Clyde's internal struggle:

"Still thinking of the complicated problem which his own life here presented, he was struck by the thought (what devil's whisper?—what evil hint of an evil spirit?)—supposing that he and Roberta—no, say he and Sondra—(no, Sondra could swim so well, and so could he)—he and Roberta were in a small boat somewhere and it should capsize at the very time, say, of this dreadful complication which was so harassing him? What an escape?" (p.648)

This passage reflects Clyde's tumultuous state of mind, depicting an inner voice that seems destined to evolve into a persuasive force, akin to an "Efrit." As the narrative unfolds, the malevolent inner force strengthens, culminating when

Clyde embarks on his delayed journey to Big Bittern. Additionally, Clyde contemplates accidental death, particularly drowning, as a solution to his troubles, expressing a longing for an end to challenges with Roberta and Sondra: "That would be the end, then, wouldn't it, of all his troubles in connection with Roberta? No more terror as to her—no more fear and heartache even as to Sondra. A noiseless, pathless, quarrelled solution of all his present difficulties, and only joy before him forever" (p.648). The quote illustrates death as a decisive resolution to relationship complexities, offering liberation from emotional turmoil. Clyde yearns for a tranquil and trouble-free conclusion to romantic entanglements, reflecting a desire for emotional relief and a peaceful future. This aligns with Freud's concept that "the aim of all life is death" (1920/1961, p. 32), suggesting an unconscious urge to return to a state devoid of life's conflicts. Clyde's contemplation can be viewed through a Freudian lens as a manifestation of the death instinct, revealing the impact of internal struggles on his perceptions and desires.

Clyde becomes entangled in a contemplation of murder, navigating a mental conflict between the allure of Roberta's plan and the firm guidance of his superego. His once clear cognitive state is now entwined with confusion, torn between tempting impulses and moral principles. The superego, serving as a representation of internalized societal norms, vehemently dissuades Clyde from embracing darkness and sinful actions: "The mere thought now caused a damp perspiration to form on his hands and face. He was not that kind of person. Decent, sane individuals did not entertain such thoughts. And so he would not either—from this hour on [...] He must never think of it again. He must never, never, never think of it—never" (p.650-651). While making this resolution, Clyde grapples with a profound sense of moral repulsion and horror regarding the idea of committing murder. The conflicting desires within him intensify—an overwhelming yearning for freedom from Roberta clashes with an acute moral aversion, contributing to a complex internal struggle.

In the middle of this mental instability, Clyde experiences vivid dreams featuring animals, symbolizing his inner conflicts and desires. Dogs represent conflicting impulses of loyalty and aggression, snakes signify tension between societal norms and personal desires, while horned animals may reflect primal instincts. According to Freud, these symbols offer insight into Clyde's complex psychological landscape, where inner conflicts, societal expectations, and repressed desires converge. The dreams serve as a symbolic arena portraying his struggles, mirroring the challenges present in his conscious life.

Dreiser employs the whimsical representations of a malevolent genie and a mysterious waterbird in the novel to intricately connect with Clyde's imaginative journeys, particularly in the planning and execution of Roberta's murder. The

malevolent genie symbolizes Clyde's sinister subconscious longings, described as "the very substance of some leering and diabolical wish or wisdom concealed in his nature" (Dreiser, p. 682). Despite initial reluctance, Clyde contemplates the malevolent urges emerging from his darker nature, becoming captivated by the efrit. The genie's influence is evident in a sinister suggestion related to Pass Lake, limiting Clyde's autonomy and freedom to act: "A row-boat or a canoe upset in such a lake and Roberta would pass forever from your life" (Dreiser, p. 682-683).

Furthermore, Dreiser introduces a mysterious water-bird that senses Clyde's murderous inclinations, emitting sharp metallic noises. The bird's cries during Clyde's trip to Big Bittern act as a frightening trigger, highlighting the tension between the extraordinary and mundane. Clyde's anxious inquiries reveal differing perspectives on reality, as the eerie encounter becomes a symbolic prelude to internal upheavals: "'Gee! That was a queer sound. It makes me feel creepy'" (Dreiser, p. 673).

Despite his emotional turmoil, Clyde articulates a reluctance to harm Roberta, exposing an internal conflict between his desires and the potential harm he might inflict upon her. In a poignant reflection of this inner struggle, he confesses, "But I don't want to kill her or injure her in any way, if she will but let me go and see her way, I will be glad not to see her anymore" (p. 684). Paradoxically, though he expresses this sentiment, Clyde remains incapable of taking action and lacks any intention to do so. This leaves him in his familiar predicament, torn between the decision to act on or dismiss the bold and ominous idea that has gripped his thoughts. Caught in the struggle between embracing or rejecting the ominous idea, underscoring the profound internal turmoil he grapples with.

During this pivotal period in the narrative, Clyde persuades Roberta to briefly return home, only to receive a threatening letter from her, wherein she asserts that if he fails to respond within two days, she will disclose their situation upon her return to Lycurgus. Confronted with the urgency of this forewarning, Clyde deems decisive action necessary and proposes a meeting with Roberta in Utica, suggesting a pre-wedding trip.

Under the influence of what is described as "the efrit of the darker self" dwelling in his contemplations, Clyde begins formulating a meticulously detailed murder plan. This intricate scheme involves a feigning agreement to marry Roberta,

organizing a trip to Big Bittern Lake, adopting a false identity, renting a boat, and intentionally capsizing it. The overarching goal is to convincingly mislead others into believing that both Clyde and Roberta tragically perished in the staged incident. As the designated day approaches, Clyde and Roberta embark on their respective journeys to Utica. Seated on the train, Clyde reviews his plans meticulously, intricately plotting every detail in his mind. The eerie ambience of the lake region intensifies the gravity of this mental process.

Dreiser also strategically incorporates a supernatural backdrop to depict Clyde's psychological descent through the gothic landscape, particularly at Big Bittern. Captivated during his initial visit, Clyde contemplates it for Roberta's murder, inspired by its "decadent and weird nature" and the impression that "for solitude and charm—or at least mystery—this region could scarcely be matched" (pp. 672-676.)

On Clyde's second visit, the once-familiar landscape undergoes a nightmarish transformation, mirroring his deteriorating mental state. The lake becomes "black like tar," surrounded by tall, dark pines resembling "armed and watchful giants" and creating a foreboding atmosphere (p. 705-706). Lifeless pine trees and eerie sounds intensify the ominous ambience, with Clyde encountering a "ghostly tap-tap-tap" of a solitary woodpecker before Roberta's tragic murder (p. 717). These quotes highlight the supernatural elements as a powerful narrative device, enhancing the tension and reflecting Clyde's psychological unravelling.

Arriving at Big Bittern with Roberta, Clyde follows his premeditated plan, hiring a rowboat for a significant act. Guided by his darker impulses personified by the "efrit" (genie), Clyde steers Roberta towards a tragic end. In a rare moment of solace, he feels "seemingly strong and yet friendly sympathetic hands" on his shoulders, contrasting with the negative connotations of the term "efrit" and deepening Clyde's internal conflicts (p. 718).

Clyde's anxiety heightens with the eerie cry of the wie-wier, disrupting his thoughts and potentially signalling a moral reckoning. The bird's repetitive call, resembling a warning or protest, prompts Clyde to ponder its significance. Perched on a dead tree linked to the initiation of Clyde's plan, the bird symbolizes his internal moral compass or superego from a Freudian perspective. Despite being aware of this higher moral authority, Clyde consistently chooses to ignore or defy it throughout the novel.

Contemplating the bird's cry, Clyde reflects, "What was it sounding—a warning—a protest—condemnation? The same bird that had marked the very

birth of this miserable plan. For there it was now upon that dead tree—that wretched bird" (p. 720). The uncertainty about the bird's cry mirrors Clyde's heightened anxiety and guilt, emphasizing the moral consequences of his choices. The bird, with its omniscient quality, represents a higher moral authority that Clyde is aware of, underscoring the superego's role in influencing ethical decision-making. Despite this awareness, Clyde consistently chooses to ignore or go against this moral guidance throughout the novel.

Finally, alone with Roberta in the secluded reach of the lake, Clyde faces the long-awaited moment meticulously planned by him or the "genie," undergoing a violent struggle between fear and hesitation. The dilemma to act or refuse is expressed as, "And yet fearing to act in any way—being unwilling to—being willing only to say that never, never would he marry her" (p.723). Roberta, noticing his contorted appearance, attempts to console him, but an inadvertent hit with the camera causes her to fall into the water as the boat capsizes.

Amidst Roberta's cries for help, Clyde, feeling pity, is tempted by the genie's whispers to ignore her plea: "Wait—wait—ignore the pity of that appeal. And then—then— But there! Behold. It is over. She is sinking now. You will never, never see her alive any more—ever" (p. 724). Yielding to hallucinatory voices, Clyde allows his dark and aggressive impulses to prevail, doing nothing to save Roberta.

Following Roberta's tragic drowning, Clyde, swimming to the shore, is haunted by the eerie cry of the wier-wier bird: "The cry of that devilish bird upon that dead limb—the weir-weir" (p.725). This final cry is symbolic, representing the culmination of Clyde's guilt and the enduring nature of his remorse. It underscores the inescapable weight of his actions and the perpetual burden on his conscience.

However, Clyde's descent into self-destruction continues as he is eventually arrested upon the discovery of his camera tripod. This marks the tragic end of his initiation into the desired society, portraying the profound consequences of his moral choices. Now labelled a murderer, Clyde awaits trial and punishment, emphasizing the ultimate cost of his actions and the irreversible nature of his downfall.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Clyde's psychological journey, shaped by the interaction between Eros and Thanatos, reveals the intricacies within his mind. Initially guided by the instinct for life (Eros), he chases after ambitions for wealth, social standing, and romantic satisfaction without obvious signs of self-destructive tendencies.

However, a psychological conflict arises following Roberta's pregnancy, as Clyde struggles with conflicting desires for Sondra and moral obligations towards Roberta. The tragic boating incident acts as a trigger for the emergence of the death instinct (Thanatos), resulting in increased aggression and irrational urges. Clyde's subsequent self-destructive actions lead to a tragic end, underscoring the complex interplay between life and death instincts in human psychology. Clyde's story serves as a warning, underscoring the potential repercussions when fundamental psychological forces clash and offering a framework for examining the intricacies of human drive and internal struggles that shape individual paths.

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پوخته

تیۆدۆر درایزەر رۆژنامه‌نووس و رۆماننووسیکی به‌ناوبانگی ئەمریکییە و پەڕیۆدیکێکی نزیکی لەگەڵ بزووێتیە و ئەدەبی سروشتیگەریی هەیە. بەرھەمەکانی رەنگدانەوی تەحەدای ئابووری-کۆمەڵایەتی سەرەمی ئەون، کارمەتەرەکان نیشان دەدەن کە لەگەڵ مەلانی ناوەکیەکان، ئارەزوو ناگاکان و دووڕیانەکانی ئەخلاقیدا دەجەنگن کە بێرۆکەکانی فرۆیدیان وەبیر دەهێنێتەو. گەڕانی درایزەر بۆ ئالۆزییە دەروونیەکانی کارمەتەرەکانی، جەخت لەسەر کاریگەری پالەنەرە بایۆلۆژییە زگماکیەکان دەکاتەو، وەک ئارەزووی سێکسی و غەریزە شەڕانگیزیەکان، لە دارشتن و تیگەشتن لە سروشت و کردارەکانی مەروفا. ئەم لیکۆلینەوێیە باس لە کارلێکی نیوان ئیروس و تاناتۆس دەکات، وەک ئەوێ سێگمۆند فرۆید گریمانەیی کردووە، لە رۆمانی "تراژیدیایەکی ئەمریکی" (۱۹۲۵)ی تیۆدۆر درایزەردا. شیکارییەکی بە سوودمەرگرتن لە تیۆری فرۆید سەبارەت بە غەریزەیی ژیان و مردن، بەدواداچوون بۆ دەروونی پالەوانی جیروکە، کلاید گریفیتس و گەشتە پشێوەکەمی بەرەو خۆ لەناوبردن دەکات. ئیروس کە هێمای غەریزەیی ژیانە، لە بەدواداچوونی ئارەزووەکانی کلایددا دەردەکەوێت، کە بە شیوەیەکی سەرەکی بریتین لە تەمەزۆیی بۆ سامان و پێشکەوتنی کۆمەڵایەتی و خوشەوێستی. لەکاتیکیدا، تاناتۆس کە هێمای غەریزە بەرەو مردنە، بە شاراوێی دەمێنێتەو بەلام پالەنریکە بۆ کلاید بەرەو کردووی زیانبەخش کە لە کۆتاییدا دەبێتە هۆی کەوتنی. ئەم توێژینەوێیە لە رێگەی شیکردنەوی قوولی کەسایەتیە ئالۆزەکان و لیکۆلینەوی وردی رۆوداوێ سەرەکیەکانی ناو رۆمانەکەو، بە کەڵکومەرگرتن لە میتۆدی شیکاری وەسفەر، رۆونی دەکاتەو کە چۆن درایزەر چەمکەکانی فرۆید بە شیوەیەکی ئالۆز دەبەستێتەو ناو گێڕانەوێ و تیشک دەخاتە سەر پالەنەرە ئالۆزەکان و مەلانی دەروونیەکانی پالەوان. لە کۆتاییدا، دۆزینەوی ئیروس و تاناتۆس لە "تراژیدیایەکی ئەمریکی" تێروانینیکی قوول دەربارەوی سروشتی مەروفا و ئارەزوو و خەباتی هەمیشەیی نیوان ژیان غەریزەیی مردن پێشکەش دەکات.

ووشەیی سەرەکی: ئارەزوو، خەبات، ئیروس، تاناتۆس، ئید، ئیگو، سوپەرێگو، غەریزەیی ژیان و مردن، کلاید.

ملخص

ثيودور درايزر، روائي وصحفي أمريكي بارز، يرتبط ارتباطاً وثيقاً بالحركة الأدبية الطبيعية. تعكس أعماله التحديات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية في عصره، حيث تصور شخصيات تتصارع مع الصراعات الداخلية، والرغبات اللاواعية، والمعضلات الأخلاقية التي تستحضر الأفكار الفرويدية. من خلال تصويره للتعقيدات النفسية للشخصيات، يسلط درايزر الضوء على الدور الهام للدوافع البيولوجية الفطرية، مثل الرغبة الجنسية والغرائز العدوانية، في تشكيل وفهم الطبيعة البشرية وأفعالها. تتناول هذه الدراسة التفاعل بين إيروس وثناتوس، كما افترضه سيغموند فرويد، في رواية ثيودور درايزر "مأساة أمريكية" (١٩٢٥). بالاعتماد على نظرية فرويد عن غرائز الحياة والموت، يبحث التحليل في نفسية بطل الرواية كلايد غريفيث ورحلته المضطربة نحو تدمير الذات. إيروس، الذي يرمز إلى غريزة الحياة، يتجلى في سعي كلايد وراء الرغبات، وفي مقدمتها توفيقه إلى الثروة والتقدم الاجتماعي والحب. ومع ذلك، فإن ثناتوس، الذي يمثل غريزة الموت، يتربص تحت السطح، مما يدفع كلايد نحو السلوكيات المدمرة ويؤدي في النهاية إلى سقوطه. من خلال تحليل الشخصية المعقدة والفحص الدقيق للأحداث الرئيسية في الرواية، تشرح هذه الورقة، باستخدام طريقة تحليلية وصفية، دمج درايزر الماهر للمفاهيم الفرويدية في السرد، وتسليط الضوء على الدوافع المعقدة والصراعات الداخلية للبطل. في النهاية، يقدم استكشاف إيروس وثناتوس في "مأساة أمريكية" رؤى عميقة حول الطبيعة البشرية، والرغبة، والصراع الأبدي بين غرائز الحياة والموت.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرغبة، النضال، إيروس، ثناتوس، الهوية، الأنا، الأنا العليا، غرائز الحياة والموت، كلايد.