Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) has surely attracted notice by the versatility of his genius. He has written novels, short stories, plays, character-sketches, poems and autobiographies. Dreiser fought for social justice. Being a realist attempting to paint objectively the life as it was lived in America at the beginning of the twentieth century, he concentrated fully on the sufferings and financial difficulties of the poor and the underdog. Dreiser was "the first American novelist to depict this aspect of American life." (Walter Allen: 37).

A number of biographical and critical studies of Theodore Dreiser as a novelist have appeared from time to time. The chief among them are M. L. Mencken's *Theodore Dreiser*, Alfred Kazin's *The Stature of*
Theodore Dreiser, Allen Moers’ Two Dreisers, F. O. Mathiessen’s Theodore Dreiser, P. L. Gerber’s Theodore Dreiser, J. J. McAlleer’s Theodore Dreiser; An Introduction and Interpretation, Dorothy- Dudley’s forgotten Frontier: Dreiser and The Land of the free, and Helen Derbyshire’s My Life with Dreiser. But no exclusive study has yet been made on the proposed Topic ‘Novels of Theodore Dreiser A study in feminist perspective’.

Theodore Dreiser was a great novelist of the early twentieth century. His feminist approach is evident in his novels. Feminism was actually an ideological movement related to woman’s freedom, equality and justice. Marie Western Croft speaks of woman’s equality in the field of law, politics and education in her book Few Rights of Women (1793). John Stuart Mill in his book
Subjugation of Women pleads for the fact that man-woman relationship should be based on friendship, and not on domination. He insists on Marriage reforms, women's right to vote, and equal right to be given to intellectual women.

During the Nineteenth Century, The Marxists find that a family has become the source of division of labour and in that family, woman is treated as private property. In this system, the woman belongs to the proletariat class and in the opinion of the Marxists; household work should be treated as public industry. In 1970, many women in Europe and America were given to believe that in spite of their right to vote, women depended on men. Dreiser in his novels depicts prominently this feministic spirit.
The thesis has been divided into seven chapters. Chapter I analyses Dreiser’s life and works and also traces the social conditions of the time. Chapter II discusses feminism and feministic movement. Chapter III presents a sympathetic treatment of the unmarried mother. The ups and down of her life are very well presented. Chapter IV demands equality for the kept women. Chapter V discusses the right of the women to physical pleasure. Dreiser was the first American novelist to depict women as sexual beings. Chapter VII presents Dreiser’s typical approach to love and marriage, particularly from the feministic point of view. The last chapter concludes the whole discussion by confirming the fact that Dreiser was a feminist. His personal life gave him the feministic attitude.
Before this preface comes to a close, it is my duty to acknowledge my gratitude to the various persons who have helped me in preparing the dissertation. First of all, I express my deep gratitude to Dr Surendra Swaroop, Principal, S.R.B.S. College, Hardoi and Ex-Convener, Board of Studies and RDC (English) for the superb guidance without whose active assistance and inspiration, this work would have not seen the light of the day. I am also grateful to Dr KK Srivastava, Sr PGT, Army Public School, Fatehgarh Cantt for checking the proof-sheets and supervising the typing of the thesis. I cannot forget to thank my parents for their financial and moral support. I also owe a lot to the following librarians: The Librarian (Sri RC Pandey), BV (PG) College, Farrukhabad, the Librarian, CSJM University Library, Kanpur, the Librarian, Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Agra and the Librarian, Lucknow University, Lucknow. I
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For documentation I have used the MLA Style Sheet which drops footnotes and the *Advanced Oxford Learner's Dictionary* has been pressed into service for any information about a word.

Miss Anupama

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