DREISER'S RESPONSE TO THE CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF SISTER CARRIE

A Report

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I recommend acceptance of this seminar paper to the Graduate college in partial fulfillment of this candidate's requirements for the degree Master of Science. The candidate has completed his oral seminar report.

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ABSTRACT

Enthusiastic acceptance of a first novel by a reputable publisher followed by its almost immediate "suppression" and condemnation is an unpleasant experience. Such was the experience of Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) with Sister Carrie. How did he respond to this hot-cold treatment? With calm and dispassion as one critic suggests, or with despair?

To establish the psychological basis for the event, the first section notices the ambivalence of Dreiser's personality--his lack of self-confidence alternating with boorish pride, his sense of inhuman fate balanced by his dogged perseverance.

The second section notes the particulars of the contract, including a question about the reason for rejection, and the publisher's grudging "publication."

The third section uses biographies, letters of Dreiser, and his several autobiographies to reconstruct his state of mind for the three critical years (1900-1903) when the added discouragements of the death of his father, estrangement from a close friend and literary ally, marital trouble, and ill health led to an attempt at suicide, followed by treatment and, finally, recovery.

The last section briefly indicates the publishing history of Sister Carrie and the establishment of Dreiser's literary

reputation.

The appendix provides a life chronology against which the shifting events can be stabilized and also a list of early reviews and their places, with a sampling of the range of appraisal.

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As a young man, Theodore Dreiser yearned for success but was never quite sure he was worthy of achieving the success about which he dreamed. Doubt or self-distrust sapped him of full enjoyment when he did succeed in doing good work. He despaired that fate would ever bestow the fame for which he hungered.

While working on a newspaper in St. Louis, the Globe-Democrat, in 1892, the twenty-one year old Dreiser was happy in his work and had good health. At times, however, fears of failure and ill-fortune brought on despondency and Dreiser would become horribly depressed thinking that he would never have the prosperity and fame he coveted. In the throes of his despondency he would examine himself for courage and conclude he had none. He was a coward of the worst sort. He berated himself for lacking knowledge of manners, dancing, and of social graces. He knew himself to be a fool, a complete failure. The aches and pains, the depression brought about by these wild imaginings became almost suicidal in intensity.[1]

His lack of self-confidence was evident in his response to his newspaper work. For example, after brilliantly

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[1]Theodore Dreiser, A Book About Myself (New York, 1922), pp. 107-108. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Myself.

reporting a passenger train crash and three oil-tank cars exploding and spraying flaming oil on dozens of people, Dreiser stayed at the scene a second day to follow up his story. Without permission from his paper he decided to stay for the third day. On the third day he received a telegram to return to his paper immediately. All the way to the office he worried that the editor-in-chief, McCullagh, was dissatisfied and would fire him. When he finally reached McCullagh's office, Dreiser had become thoroughly depressed. Expecting the worst he was startled when McCullagh congratulated him for the fine piece of work, raised his salary five dollars, and handed him a twenty-dollar bill as a bonus (Myself, pp. 167-168).

Kenneth S. Lynn in his essay "Theodore Dreiser: The Man of Ice" quotes Dreiser as saying: "I was always driven by haunting fear of losing this or any position I had ever had, of not being able to find another."[2]

Dreiser's fear that he might lose his job was realized when as drama critic he made the fatal error of writing up the openings of three plays he did not see one evening because he was sent by the city editor, Mitchell, on another assignment. Dreiser's reviews appeared in the morning paper.

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[2]Kenneth S. Lynn, The Dream of Success, A Study of the Modern American Imagination (Boston, 1955), p. 21.

He was horrified when he read an announcement in a rival paper that, because of a storm causing washouts, the train service had been disrupted and none of the three shows had arrived the night before. He saw himself as the laughing-stock of the town. He was ruined and ruined after all his fine dreams of success. Without waiting to be fired, Dreiser returned to the Globe-Democrat, left a note of explanation for McCullagh, cleared out his desk, shunned his friends, and brooded in his room in a spirit of agonized depression (Myself, pp. 202-205). After a week of hiding, Dreiser went to work for a smaller paper, the St. Louis Republic, at decreased wages.[3]

When Dreiser tiring of St. Louis and longing to work in New York resigned his position on the St. Louis Republic in 1893, the publisher gave him a general letter of introduction "To Whom it Might Concern" which praised Dreiser's labors and capacities. Dreiser claims to have carried the letter for over a year in his pocket, but never used it even when he was without a job and nearly without funds. The letter could have secured him a position to his advantage. Writing as an older man remembering his youth, Dreiser

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[3]John J. McAleer, Theodore Dreiser (New York, 1968), p. 20. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as McAleer.

concludes that he could not bring himself to use the letter because "It was somewhat above my capacity, said more for me than I deserved, and might secure for me some place which I could not fill" (Myself, p. 360).

Dreiser's dream was to achieve success, but he did not believe himself worthy of success. Other men Dreiser felt were more important than he and more fortunate in achieving high positions. Once on a train traveling to the country, Dreiser selected two drummers as being "among the most fortunate of men, high up in the world as positions go, able to steer straight and profitable courses for themselves" (Myself, p. 362). He longed to emulate their success.

The same thought of being less than his fortunate fellow man is repeated when he muses on the meaning of life during his return to St. Louis in July, 1894.

> Some had strength or capacity or looks or fortune, or all, at their command, and then all the world was theirs, and love perhaps, and the companionship of interesting capable people; but I, poor waif, with no definite or arresting skill of any kind, not even that of commerce, must go fumbling about looking in upon life from the outside, as it were. Beautiful women, or so I argued, were drawn to any but me. The great opportunities of the day in trade and commerce were for any but me. I should never have a fraction of the means to do as I wished or to share in the life that I most craved. I was an Ishmael, a wanderer (Myself, p. 430).

Dreiser's lack of self-confidence was sharply contrasted by occasional responses of boorish pride. He would become emboldened by small successes as a newspaper reporter and

his mind would seeth with grandiose ideas of himself as a brilliant success. When Dreiser did feel self-confidence his manner became one of swaggering self-importance. He grew so in his own estimation that he put on airs, believed no one could replace him, belittled his co-workers, and took liberties with the rules which governed other reporters. Others' esteem of him flattered him and made him feel he was becoming a power (Myself, p. 309).

While eating a meal on a train "some poor-looking framer boys in jeans and 'galluses' and wrinkled hats" looked at Dreiser with interest when the train was stopped at a station. Dreiser's reaction was typical. He hoped as he stared down at the farmer boys that he would be taken for a millionaire to whom eating on a train "was little more than a wearisome commonplace." Dreiser "felt fully capable of playing the part and so gave the boys a cold and repressive glance, as much as to say, Behold!" He "assured himself that the way to establish his own true worth was to make every one else feel small by comparison" (Myself, p. 362). How unrealistic was his estimation of his true worth.

This fragile veneer of self-confidence cracked wide open after repeated disappointments. His disappointments, his wounded self-confidence, his belief that fate or fortune makes or mars a human life, disenchanted the dreamy ambitious

Dreiser.[4]

In his life as a newspaper reporter the disparity between the fortunate and the unfortunate was constantly before him. The miseries of the poor, the slum areas of Chicago, the wretchedness of prostitutes, rum-soaked bums, drug fiends, affected Dreiser acutely. Why, he asked himself over and over again as he walked through the region and looked at the misery and degeneracy, did an omnipresent and omnipotent, all wise and merciful God allow this to be so? Who was to blame? Was God to blame? Or government? Or society? Or did the people themselves have something to do with their vile circumstances? (Myself, pp. 65-67, 107). Dreiser was always trying to find out the why and wherefore of life.[5] Out of his ponderings on this possibly unsolvable misery he suspected that man was a victim of forces over which he had no control.

Walking the streets and viewing the lives and activities of others often left him with intensely gloomy moments. "Life," he raged, often "used people, sometimes to their advantage, sometimes not. For some, the lightning of chance was always striking in somewhere and disrupting plans,

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[4]Philip L. Gerber, Theodore Dreiser (New York, 1964), p. 34.

[5]"Dreiser the Great," Newsweek, XXVII, March 25, 1946, p. 102.

leaving destruction and death in its wake, for others luck or fortune" (Myself, p. 139).

This philosophy of determinism was a basic belief woven into Dreiser's response to life and later into the fabric of his novels. Dreiser's great books are "pitiless in their delineation of the way circumstances drive man, the way impulses in man's organism, and tendencies in society, are more powerful than the will of man."[6] "The theme of determinism...carries the idea that natural law and socio-economic influences are more powerful than the human will."[7]

Dreiser comments thus on determinism:

> I might propose and believe, but there were things above my planning or powers, and creatures I might choose to despise were not so helpless after all. It fixed my thoughts permanently on the weakness of the human mind as a directing organ. One might think till doomsday in terms of human ideas, but apparently over and above ideas there were forces which superseded or controlled them (Myself, p. 307).

While writing for a newspaper in Pittsburgh in 1894 in his cross-country progress towards New York, Dreiser learned it was the policy of the local newspapers to keep separate the districts or regions of extreme poverty and extreme wealth, granting favors and compliments to those who had

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[6]James T. Farrell, "Theodore Dreiser: In Memoriam," Saturday Review of Literature, XXIX, January 12, 1946, p. 28.

[7]Charles Child Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream (Minneapolis, 1956), p. 20.

wealth and slights and indifferences to those who had not. Dreiser writes:

> All I could think of was that since nature would not or could not do anything for man, he must, if he could, do something for himself; and of this I saw no prospect, he being a product of these self-same accidental indifferent and bitterly cruel forces (Myself, p. 459).

The struggle of each individual against his intellectual and cultural heritage, Dreiser felt, was impotent and purposeless. He saw the world as a "seething, stormy, bitter, gay, rewarding and destroying realm."[8] Life cared not a whit for the welfare of any particular individual (Hey Rub-A-Dub-Dub, p. 256).

What Dreiser saw of life in New York City when he arrived in November 1894--degradation, financial trickery, lavish show of wealth and bitter poverty, deprivation, and misery--discouraged him extremely.

> How was a sniveling scribbler to make his way in such a world? Nothing but chance and luck, as I saw it, could further the average man or lift him out of his rut, and since when had it been proved that I was a favorite of fortune? A crushing sense of incompetence and general inefficiency seemed to settle upon me, and I could not shake it off. Whenever I went out on an assignment--and I was always being sent upon those trivial, shoe-wear affairs--I carried with me this sense of my unimportance (Myself, pp. 480-481).

Dreiser was extremely sensitive to the promise and possibilities that life could offer him. But underneath his

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[8]Theodore Dreiser, "Life, Art and America," Hey Rub-A-Dub-Dub (New York, 1920), p. 255. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Hey Rub-A-Dub-Dub.

intense longings and dreams was the ever present doubt that he would be able to achieve anything.

Though Dreiser was painfully aware of his inadequacies and tended to magnify them, he persevered in overcoming them. Having made up his mind that he must become a newspaper man in Chicago in the spring of 1892 and failing in his attempt to find a place with a paper, Dreiser decided to select one paper and dog it until he worked his way into a job. The paper he selected was the Daily Globe, a struggling paper supported by a Chicago politician for political purposes. Hanging around the newspaper office daily for two weeks finally paid off with an assignment (Myself, pp. 37-39).

His position on the Chicago Daily Globe was the beginning of his newspaper career. Six months later having learned to write copy and having made a modest success of his first newspaper job, Dreiser according to chief editor McEnnis, was ready for work on a larger paper (Myself, pp. 75-83).

In November of 1892, McEnnis arranged for a transfer from the Chicago Daily Globe to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat where Dreiser could give his talents greater range. During his stay in St. Louis Dreiser not only grew in reportorial experience but formed the attachment to Sara Osborne White which would lead to a stormy marriage six years later.

From November 1892 to November 1894 Dreiser worked on newspapers in St. Louis, Toledo, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh

always keeping before him the dream of becoming a successful newspaper man in New York City. Finally arriving in New York City late in November of 1894, twenty-three year old Dreiser found hunting for a job extremely frustrating.[9]

Becoming angry at being kept by "fierce youths" from seeing the city editor at the World, Dreiser attempted to walk past the guards, was intercepted, lost courage, and retreated. However, Dreiser was not going to give up. He writes:

> I meditated most grievously as to my failure, my lack of skill and courage in carrying out my intention. So thoroughly did I castigate myself that I recovered my nerve and returned. I reentered the small office, and finding two of the youths still on hand and waiting to intercept me, brushed them both aside as one might flies, opened the much-guarded door and walked in (Myself, pp. 465-466).

When asked what he wanted Dreiser demanded: "I want a job." The city editor, liking his perseverance and determination, gave him his first assignment (Myself, p. 466).

Dreiser's spirits rose at the prospect of securing a coveted position on a New York newspaper. Dreiser writes:

> And now of a sudden here I was thus swiftly vaulted into the very position which of all others I had most craved. Surely now if I had the least trace of ability, I should be in a better position than I had ever been in before (Myself, p. 467).

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[9]Robert H. Elias, Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature (New York, 1949), p. 83. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Apostle.

Dreiser's elation was dashed when he found out he was a "space" reporter paid only for the number of inches of column actually published. Not only was the amount earned too little to live on and the leg-work fatiguing, but when he did have an excellent story he had to turn it over to a rewrite man and got no credit for himself (Myself, 473-477, 485, 486).

The crisis came when Dreiser summoned enough courage to ask the assistant's permission to write up his own story. Dreiser said: "I'm not a beginner in this game. I wrote stories, and big ones before ever I came to this paper" (Myself, p. 501).

"Maybe you did," the assistant replied rather sardonically, "but we have the feeling that you haven't proved to be of much use to us" (Myself, p. 501).

Terribly hurt in pride and realizing that he was not achieving success as a newsman in New York that he had achieved as a feature writer in St. Louis and Pittsburgh, Dreiser quit the job before he would be fired.

The personality traits so strongly exhibited early in Dreiser's career--fear of failure, lack of self-confidence alternating with boorish pride, belief in determinism, and strength of perseverance--would influence his reaction to the publishing failure of his first novel, Sister Carrie.

When he could not find another position partly because of the high unemployment conditions in New York and when his funds dwindled to a starvation level, Dreiser approached the music publishing company, Howley, Haviland and Company, of which his brother, Paul, was one of the three partners.

Having learned that Howley, Haviland and Company were talking of starting a magazine Dreiser proposed to Paul and his two partners to let him set up and edit the magazine which would be built around four songs per issue and which would include selected fiction, book reviews, poetry, and pictures. Dreiser, now twenty-four years old, became editor of Ev'ry Month in October 1895. Ev'ry Month enjoyed a modest success under Dreiser's editing and managing. However Dreiser, feeling his abilities were not adequately appreciated, "quarreled with Paul, then quarreled also apparently with Howley, demanded a better salary and more editorial freedom, and found himself without a job. The September 1897 Ev'ry Month was his last."[10]

Strongly in need of success and money, Dreiser turned his restless energy toward hack-writing and "contributed signed articles, essays, and interviews to magazines ranging from Truth, Success, and the New Voice to the Cosmopolitan

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[10]W. A. Swanberg, Dreiser (New York, 1965), pp. 68-71, 75. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Swanberg.

and Harper's Monthly at prices that averaged more than a hundred dollars each" (Apostle, p. 95).

The new status of a successful free-lance writer should have satisfied Dreiser's yearning, but it did not. The dream that he was "destined for a great end" was so powerful that he alternated between fears of his own inferiority and dreams of his great achievements (Myself, p. 98).

Dreiser now prospering as a writer could no longer put off his promise to marry Sara White, a country school teacher, twenty-seven months his senior, who had waited six years for him. Theodore Dreiser and Sara Osborne White were married in Washington, D. C., on December 28, 1898 (Swanberg, p. 80).

Dreiser later described his marriage to "Jug" as "the pale flame of duty" (Myself, p. 502). In an obviously autobiographic writing ascribed to "Rella" in A Gallery of Women Dreiser later wrote: "For me marriage was a mistake. Either mine was not a temperament which lent itself to marriage, or I had erred in selecting the mate with whom it might have proved a success."[11]

Interested in a flirtation with a teen-age girl he wrote in "Rella" of his irritation in regard to marriage:

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[11]Theodore Dreiser, A Gallery of Women, Vol. II (New York, 1929), p. 482. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Gallery.

"God! To be cribbed, cabined, confined! Why had I so early in life handicapped myself in the race for happiness?" (Gallery, p. 494).

In July of 1899, Dreiser and Jug visited Arthur and Maude Henry at Maumee, Ohio. Arthur Henry had become Dreiser's intimate friend following their meeting in Toledo, Ohio, in 1894 when Henry was city editor of the Toledo Blade.[12] The friendship was strengthened when Henry became a contributor to Ev'ry Month when Dreiser was its editor (Apostle, p. 93). Henry's presence as a congenial friend with whom to share ideas and feelings was an important influence on Dreiser in encouraging him to bring his dreams to concrete form. Henry, insisting that Dreiser try writing short stories, encouraged and drove him into writing five which were later accepted for publication (Apostle, pp. 103-105).

In a letter to H. L. Mencken in 1916 Dreiser says that in persuading him to write short stories, Henry "nagged until I did, saying he saw short stories in me. I wrote one finally, sitting in the same room with him in a house

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[12]Letter from Theodore Dreiser to H. L. Mencken, May 13, 1916, in Robert H. Elias (ed.), Letters of Theodore Dreiser (Philadelphia, 1959), I, p. 212. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Letters, I.

on the Maumee River at Maumee, Ohio, outside Toledo" (Letters, I, p. 212). Finding fiction so agreeable, Dreiser was persuaded by Henry to begin a novel. As Dreiser worked on Sister Carrie, Arthur Henry worked beside him on A Princess of Arcady (Letters, I, p. 213).[13] Henry's confidence in Dreiser's ability to write, the pressure Henry exerted on Dreiser not to quit when he hit a snag, and Henry's intense interest in the last chapters forced Dreiser to finish the novel (Letters, I, p. 213).

> In Carrie for the first time of importance, Dreiser translated his own experience into the desperate, hopeless yearnings of his characters.... Now the reluctant conformist was free to write as he pleased about life as he saw it. He let himself go far, far into unconformity, apparently not realizing the extent of his divagation.... He seems to have no inkling that he was creating a revolutionary work (Swanberg, p. 83).

What in Sister Carrie would cause it to be branded a "revolutionary work?" Genteel readers were "repelled not only by the cheapness of the characters but even more by the fact that the author admired them."[14] Dreiser willfully affronted the standards of morality by which respectable Americans claimed to live by his tolerance for transgression.

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[13]Counter information quoted in book by Burton Rascoe, Theodore Dreiser (New York, 1926), p. 37: "Sister Carrie was begun while Mr. Dreiser was working on a newspaper in Cleveland."

[14]Malcolm Cowley, "Sister Carrie: Her Fall and Rise," The Stature of Theodore Dreiser, eds. Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro. (Bloomington, 1955), p. 176. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Stature.

Carrie had yielded her virtue and instead of the inevitable punishment for her transgressions had prospered and become a famous actress.

The realism of the tale--the contrasts of grandeur and misery--was unpleasant. In his direct presentation of life as he saw it, Dreiser disturbed those who were in love with illusion. Dreiser's view of life was factual. He "presented the facts of life one after another with a bitter, brutal insistence on their so-ness" (Stuart P. Sherman, "The Barbaric Naturalism of Mr. Dreiser," Stature, p. 72).

Dreiser had started Sister Carrie in mid-September of 1899. Delays for gleaning material for article writings, several fictional problems that stopped the novel temporarily, and discouragements overcome only by Arthur Henry's firm hand, delayed the novel. In spite of these problems, Sister Carrie was completed only seven months after it was started.[15] Now after pruning excess verbiage and some editing, Sister Carrie was ready for publication (Swanberg, p. 85). Dreiser, the novelist, was now twenty-eight years of age.

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[15]Counter information quoted in book by Burton Rascoe, Theodore Dreiser (New York, 1926), p. 37: "...Mr. Dreiser put the manuscript away for two years before he could finish it."

Dreiser submitted the manuscript through the editor of Harper's Monthly, Henry Mills Alden, to Harper and Brothers. Harper and Brothers rejected the manuscript but gave Dreiser reason for hope of its final success. Alden told Dreiser Sister Carrie was "a superior piece of reportorial realism," but it was doubtful that a publisher would accept it because of the realism (Swanberg, p. 85) (Letters, I, p. 210). Alden suggested that Dreiser submit the manuscript to the younger firm of Doubleday, Page and Company which had in the previous year published Frank Norris's McTeague which was also a true portrayal of American life (Swanberg, pp. 85-86). Dreiser felt encouraged and submitted Sister Carrie to Doubleday. Frank Norris, then a reader for Doubleday, read the manuscript and "exclaimed aloud over its excellence" (Apostle, p. 111).

Dreiser in a letter to Fremont Older on November 27, 1923, writes of his memory of this period of his life:

> He [Norris] sent for me and told me quite enthusiastically that he thought it was a fine book, and that he was satisfied that Doubleday would be glad to publish it, but that more time for a final decision would be required....
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> About a week or ten days later I had a letter from Walter H. Page, the late ambassador, who asked me to call. And when I came he congratulated me on the character of the work and announced that it was to be accepted for publication, and that he would send me a contract which I was to sign. Also, because he appeared to like the work very much, he announced that no pains would be spared to launch the book properly, and that--(the glorious American press agent spirit of the

> day, I presume)--he was thinking of giving me a dinner, to which various literary people would be invited in order to attract attention to the work and to me. Being very young, very green, and very impressionable, this brought about very ponderous notions as to my own importance which might just as well have been allowed to rest, particularly in the light of what followed.[16]

The prospect of success, happy dreams of fame and power about to be realized, and letters of praise and congratulation overjoyed Dreiser. Always naively proud of his work and in this agreeable atmosphere of praise and recognition, Dreiser "let his old newspaper colleagues in St. Louis and Pittsburgh know of the acceptance of Carrie" (Swanberg, p. 86). His confidence became so strong in his new state as novelist that he wrote "I decided to be about the work of another novel,--to join the one a year group, which seemed to be what was expected of me" (Letters, II, p. 418).

When confronted with the shocking debacle that the cancelling of the contract to publish Sister Carrie would cause, Dreiser, because his expectations had been so naively magnified, plunged into depths of disappointment.

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[16]Letter from Theodore Dreiser to Fremont Older, November 27, 1923, in Robert H. Elias (ed.), Letters of Theodore Dreiser (Philadelphia, 1959), II, p. 418. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Letters, II.

What caused the publisher, Doubleday, Page and Company, to insist on cancelling the contract to publish Sister Carrie?

Frank Doubleday and his wife Neltje had been in Europe when Frank Norris, reader for the firm, Henry Lanier, a junior partner, and Walter Hines Page, Doubleday's senior partner, had accepted the book for publication. When the Doubledays returned they both read the novel and heartily disliked it. Whether or not the legend that Neltje De Graff Doubleday, a strong-willed social worker, took such an aversion to the book that she asked her husband to break the contract is true may never be known. What is important is Dreiser's belief that she was the cause of the "suppression" of Sister Carrie. The irrational bitterness that he harbored the rest of his life against Neltje Doubleday caused him to color his recollection of the episode.

Dreiser, in a letter dated November 27, 1923, to Fremont Older recalling the situation, wrote:

> According as Norris, and later William Heinemann of London, informed me, he [Frank Doubleday] took the book home and gave it to his wife. Being of a conventional and victorian turn, I believe--(I have always been told so)--she took a violent dislike to the book and proceeded to discourage her husband as to its publication. He in turn sent for me, and asked me to release him from the contract which had already been signed. His statement to me was that he did not like the book and would not publish it (Letters, II, pp. 418-419).

He wrote in "The Early Adventures of Sister Carrie" in The Colophon, 1931, that

> Mrs. Frank Doubleday read the manuscript and was horrified by its frankness. She was a social worker and active in moral reform, and because of her strong dislike for the book and insistence that it be withdrawn from publication, Doubleday Page decided not to put it in circulation.[17]

Rightly or wrongly Dreiser blamed Mrs. Doubleday for Sister Carrie's difficulties. The psychological effect of his disappointment over the publishing difficulties of Sister Carrie would later drive Dreiser into a nervous breakdown and the contemplation of suicide. Any sustained work would become impossible for him for a period of three years. "A decade would elapse before he would dare trust himself to fiction."[18]

Walter H. Page wrote this explanation to Dreiser as to why Frank Doubleday turned down Sister Carrie after the contract had been signed:

> I told you that we would publish Sister Carrie; but, since you went away, we have had an opportunity, which had not presented itself before, thoroughly to discuss the book; and the more we have discussed it, I am sorry to report to you, the more uncertain do we

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[17]Theodore Dreiser, "The Early Adventures of Sister Carrie," The Colophon, A Book Collectors' Quarterly, Part IV (New York, 1931). Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Colophon.

[18]F. O. Matthiessen, Theodore Dreiser (Scranton, 1951), p. 94.

> feel about it. The feeling has grown upon us that, excellent as your workmanship is, the choice of your characters has been unfortunate.... To be frank, we prefer not to publish the book, and we should like to be released from my agreement with you. If you have suffered any injury, we stand ready, of course, to make amends (Letter from Walter H. Page to Theodore Dreiser, July 23, 1900, Letters, I, p. 55).

What injuries did Theodore Dreiser suffer? The injuries received from "the suppression of Sister Carrie almost finished Dreiser both as an artist and as a man" (McAleer, p. 40). The next three years in Dreiser's life reflect the psychological sense of futility caused by the suppression of Sister Carrie which culminated in a breakdown which led almost to suicide.

Yet Robert C. Spiller in the book Literary History of the United States makes the statement that Dreiser "apparently was not disturbed by his rejection for a dozen years."[19] Spiller's statement is discounted by the events following the publisher's reversal of decision.

In a letter to Mr. Page on July 23, 1900, Dreiser writes of what his injuries would be. The main portion of this very substantial letter which analyzes the injuries Dreiser feels will result is worthy of quotation:

> Outside of the matter of preserving your own interest, I am loath to believe that the firm of Doubleday and Page would countenance an injury to me.

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[19]Robert E. Spiller, Literary History of the United States (New York, 1948), II, p. 1197.

How could the proud Theodore Dreiser permit himself to be humiliated by the peculiar defeat of saying that the original good opinion of publisher and friends was not warranted? What would his friends think when the highly praised book failed to appear? What material injury would conceivably result if his reputation was impaired and magazine editors refused his work? Dreiser concluded after a sleepless night that the book must be published.

In a letter to Arthur Henry, July 23, 1900, from Montgomery City, Missouri, Dreiser, in answering Henry's letter in which Henry had indicated Lanier's dissent to publish Sister Carrie, indicates his state of mind:

> Friday night, for some reason, the thing culminated in a deep gloom for which I could give no reason. It held me tightly and I dropped everything to muse. I suffered a physical derangement of the nervous system went to bed to roll until nearly morning (Letter from Theodore Dreiser to Arthur Henry, July 23, 1900, Letters, I, p. 53).

Already under emotional stress because of his marital problems, now sleeping poorly under the distress of the publishing problems with Doubleday over Sister Carrie, Dreiser's "instability was moving toward irrationality" (Swanberg, p. 91).

Believing that he had written a great book which would succeed on its own merits and advised by his close friend, Arthur Henry, Dreiser forced the antagonistic publisher, Doubleday and Page, to bring out his book according to

contract (Swanberg, p. 90).

Honoring their contract by printing the book, but providing no advertising to proclaim its "birth," Doubleday and Page published Sister Carrie on November 8, 1900 (Apostle, p. 114).

Doubleday "printed sheets for at least 1,250 books and had 1,000 of them bound in red cloth with black lettering at $1.50 a copy" (Swanberg, p. 91).[20] Frank Norris, putting forth a large effort in Dreiser's behalf, sent out "127 review copies to leading newspapers and magazines" (Swanberg, p. 91). Without advertising to guide them, the literary editors saw no merit in the novel. Public libraries, church people, and conservative households would not buy a book condemned by its critics as immoral. Only "four hundred and fifty-six copies were sold giving Dreiser royalties of $68.40 - a disaster that all but crushed him" (Swanberg, p. 92).[21]

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[20] H. F. Mencken, A Book of Prefaces (New York, 1917), p. 101. "Copies of this edition are now eagerly sought by book-collectors, and one in good condition fetches $25 or more in the auction rooms." Now in 1968 prices are upwards of $100.

[21] Malcolm Cowley, "Sister Carrie: Her Fall and Rise," Stature, p. 178. "The Doubleday records show that 1,008 copies of the book were bound, that 129 were sent out for review and that only 465 were sold."

Frank Norris took a personal interest in Dreiser's behalf singing the book's praises in personal letters which accompanied many of the review copies. Due to Norris's efforts the book was widely reviewed. A list of early reviews, their dates and places, with a sampling of the range of appraisal appears in the appendix. Although the book reviews were not unanimously bad, the majority appeared from November 1900 to March 1901, a period of five months after publication; the publishers refused to support the book as they would a book they liked.

Many of the reviews that were generally favorable also spoke of the book's weaknesses. The book review in the Louisville Times, Louisville, Kentucky, November 30, 1900, said that the phase of realism in Sister Carrie is

> sometimes morbid and sometimes forbidding. At its best it is grim and shadowy. It reeks of life's sordid endeavor; of the lowly home and the hopelessly restricted existence. Because Theodore Dreiser has chosen to tell of the other side... of the social scale, he may not have brilliant success, but he will have the credit that must be accorded a man who has written faithfully and impressively.... It is a remarkable book, a strong, virile, written with the clear determination of a man who has a story to tell and who tells it (Stature, pp. 53-54).

The New York Commercial Advertiser on December 19, 1900, wrote of "the extraordinary power with which this novel is vested" but called the "titular heroine" of Sister Carrie "a very frequent and commonplace type" (Stature, p. 55).

The Newark Sunday News, September 1, 1901, recognized Mr. Dreiser's "unsparing realism and detail," "the terrible inevitableness of fact," the remarkable "power of individualism so highly developed," but complained of the "portrayal of decidedly second-rate people--second rate as to character, mental capacity and culture," "its utter lack of any approach to a literary manner of fiction," and its "illiterate diction." The review states that the effect of commonplace characters is "depressing" yet cites "its merits are those which betray great talent--possibly genius" (Stature, pp. 62-64).

Always sensitive and emotional, Dreiser's response to the circumstances involving him had on many previous occasions reached the heights of elation and wish-fulfillment and upon the heels of elation plunged into fearful depths of despair. Suffering terribly as the rejected artist after once achieving encouragement and recognition as the author of Sister Carrie, Dreiser's gloom was further intensified by the events which followed.

On December 25, 1900, Dreiser's father, John Paul Dreiser, seventy-nine years old, died (Swanberg, p. 94). Dreiser once wrote of his father, "Never have I known a man more obsessed by a religious belief."[22] As a child, Theodore

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[22]Theodore Dreiser, Dawn (New York, 1931), pp. 5-6.

The black mood and magnified jealousy erupted into a quarrel and the Dreisers left at the end of July. The quarrel with Henry widened when Dreiser read Henry's novel, An Island Cabin and became inflamed when he found himself portrayed under a fictitious name as a "complainer who blighted the summer outing there" (Swanberg, p. 109). The breach in their friendship was impossible to mend. No longer would Dreiser have Arthur Henry at his side to serve and guide him.

Taking a cheap apartment on New York's East End Avenue at Eighty-second Street, Dreiser tried to resume work on two novels, The Rake and Jennie Gerhardt while continuing to write articles on the side (Swanberg, p. 96).[24] Upset by rejections from magazines, depressed by his dreary neighborhood, his frenzy of production deteriorated as his gloomy feelings overcame his efforts and he succumbed to brooding that he was unwanted and a failure (Apostle, p. 123).

The neighborhood which overlooked the East River and Blackwell's Island where the sick, criminal, and insane were housed depressed him and increased his sense of despair. He became melancholy, felt Jug improperly sympathetic toward his writing, too possessive, and wished to be free of her (Apostle, pp. 122-123). Brooding over his apparent failure

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[24]Jennie Gerhardt was then titled The Transgressor. The Rake may have developed into the later Genius.

and questioning his ability, Dreiser was difficult to live with. His suffering was developing into neurosis, a minor psychiatric reaction characterized by disorder of the personality functions or the functions of bodily organs and resulting in personality difficulties.

The one bright spot in the gloomy picture was Frank Norris's steadfast belief in Dreiser as an artist. In May 1901, Norris had sent a copy of Sister Carrie to the British publisher, William Heinemann, who had liked it. William Heinemann in a letter written to Doubleday, Page and Company said he looked on Dreiser as an author of exceptional merit and congratulated them heartily in having discovered him. Doubleday, Page and Company forwarded the letter to Dreiser without comment. In August 1901, Heinemann contracted with Dreiser to bring out in England a curtailed version of Sister Carrie to fit his Dollar Library of American Fiction (Swanberg, pp. 95-97).

The British gave Sister Carrie a warmer reception than had Dreiser's own country. The New York Commercial Advertiser, September 18, 1901, wrote that in England "where it /Sister Carrie/ had just appeared in Heinemann's Dollar Library of American Fiction, it is winning golden opinions from the critics" (Stature, p. 65).

Warmed and encouraged by the praise of his British critics, Dreiser became persistent in his effort to have

Sister Carrie reissued in America. Dreiser sent the book to "Appleton's, Stokes, Scribners, Dodd, Mead, A. S. Barnes, and others," but in view of its recent failure, the book received rejections (Swanberg, p. 97).

The judgments of English critics published in English papers created a stir of condemnation in New York for "their fantastic notions of American fiction" (Stature, p. 178).

> Dreiser found that magazine editors were suddenly uninterested in his articles and stories, which had once been widely published; the new ones were coming back with rejection slips. One editor said, "You are a disgrace to America." The Atlantic Monthly wrote him that he was "morally bankrupt" and could not publish there (Stature, p. 179).

The English edition of Sister Carrie which brought Dreiser international recognition "sold 1,161 copies to January 1, 1902, bringing Theodore Dreiser $111.46 in royalties" (Swanberg, p. 543). Royalties from the sale of Sister Carrie in America and in England brought a return to Dreiser of less than $200 - a negligible amount.

Dreiser, who had feared becoming a total failure, becoming a man whom society condemned, becoming a man spurned and tossed by frivolous chance, sank even deeper into despair.

But Dreiser did receive one encouraging response from a firm to whom he had sent Sister Carrie for reissue. Rutger B. Jewett, editor of the small firm of J. F. Taylor and Company, said he admired Sister Carrie and wrote to Dreiser

on September 20, 1901, that he believed in his work and intended to make arrangements for Dreiser to finish his second book. The J. F. Taylor Company considered reissuing Sister Carrie but felt it was impossible to get the book stores to consider the novel under the old name because many of the copies still remained on the store shelves unsold. The arrangements Joseph Taylor, the president, and Rutger B. Jewett, editor, made with Dreiser were that they agreed to buy Doubleday's plates and stock of Sister Carrie and to advance $15.00 a week on Dreiser's promise to finish Jennie Gerhardt within a year (Swanberg, pp. 93, 97).

In the article "The Early Adventures of Sister Carrie," Dreiser writes:

> My intention was to furnish them [J. F. Taylor and Company] with Jennie Gerhardt, but my health being poor I could not complete it. In the meantime the plates of Sister Carrie and some bound and unbound copies had been purchased by them for five hundred dollars or thereabouts. Later, having turned to editorial work, I laid up sufficient to repurchase the plates and copies (Colophon).

With a sagging income, worries about money plagued Dreiser. The $15.00 weekly advances from Taylor and Company were not enough to live on in New York, so in November of 1901 Dreiser and Jug left the East side neighborhood which had stifled and depressed him to find a quiet spot where living was cheaper in Bedford City, Virginia. Hoping to rid himself of his depression and to recapture his creative

mood, Dreiser again strove to tell the story of Jennie Gerhardt (Swanberg, pp. 97-98).

On November 14, 1901, from Bedford City, Virginia, Dreiser writes to his editor and critic, Mary Annabel Fanton Roberts, reflecting his cheered mood.

> Here I be, full of glee--rich as, rich as--rich can be, or something to that effect. Oh you ought to breathe in this sweet thin air. Lord a'mighty it's great (Letters, I, p. 66).

A few paragraphs on in the letter he adds:

> "I feel as if my malarial feeling were certain to quickly leave me and be replaced by a desire to work" (Letters, I, p. 66).

In describing the sky at night and its millions of glistening stars he continues:

> Underneath is this little town, its cottages hugging the ground and the soft glow of the windows seeming to struggle in a feeble way against the immensity of the blind universe without.
>
> -Oh the little lamps, the wee little humans! How they struggle between the crannies of the world (Letters, I, p. 67).

Even a cheered mood did not dispell Dreiser's feeling of determinism--the feeble struggle of the "wee little humans" against the "immensity of the blind universe." Was he not talking of his own struggle?

Again, depression seized him. By mid-December when Dreiser and Jug left for Missouri to spend Christmas with her family little progress had been made on the novel.

After Christmas the Dreisers took a trip to the Gulf Coast and in February 1902 stayed at the curative springs in Hinton, West Virginia, in an attempt for Dreiser to regain his stability. Leaving Jug behind in Hinton, Dreiser fearing for his sanity fled to Lynchburg, Virginia, and then to Charlottesville where he stayed through April and May (Swanberg, pp. 99-100).

In his flight from town to town Dreiser hoped to escape from his depression and find the spot where good fortune would smile on him. Dreiser made the following statement in 1894, but he could just as well have said it again in 1902:

> Sometimes I really believe that certain lives are predestined to undergo a given group of experiences, else why the unconscionable urge to move and be away which drives some people like the cuts of a lash? (Myself, p. 337).

By June Dreiser was so disheartened that he was unable to write. Believing walking would soothe and calm his nerves, he left Charlottesville on a walking tour through Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware that would cover more than three hundred miles (Swanberg, p. 100).

His own unhappy state made it impossible to have his novel Jennie Gerhardt finished and ready to meet a September 1 publication date. In a letter to Dreiser, Jewett shows his

kindliness and encouragement:

> If the book cannot mature in time for September publication it will be better to postpone the issue until the following February.... Do not get discouraged (Letter from R. B. Jewett to Theodore Dreiser, June 27, 1902, Swanberg, p. 100).

In six months time Dreiser because of his travail had been able to write only ten short chapters of Jennie Gerhardt which Jewett had read and exclaimed over eagerly in two letters to Dreiser in May 1902 (Swanberg, p. 100).

In Philadelphia, July, 1902, Dreiser nervously unstrung, realized the hopelessness of his efforts and was unable to write. His moods alternated between moments of elation and fits of profound depression. He

> felt ill, imagined he was losing his hair, suffered pains in his fingertips, developed an abnormally large appetite but tried to save money by curtailing the amount he ate, could not sleep when he needed rest, and could not write when he tried to use his mind (Apostle, pp. 124-125).

Recalling this illness, Dreiser wrote to William C. Lengel on March 6, 1927:

> I developed not only neurasthenia in a sharp form but also a lung spot as present x-rays show--an old scar. I found myself unable to write. Hence unable to earn. And I went down and down (Letters, II, p. 423).

Jug joined Dreiser in Philadelphia before the end of the summer of 1902 but was unable to help him overcome the horrors of his illness and his fear that his troubles were "foreordained--worked out by invisible and adverse powers" (Swanberg, p. 101).

He chose to live in Brooklyn where living would be cheaper, where no friends would see him, and where he hoped to write a few magazine articles to earn a living. Without the $15.00 weekly advances and only $32.00 in his pocket he was forced to make an effort to earn a living. He did receive a few assignments from magazine editors but was too broken in spirit to write well. He applied for work on newspapers and also for manual work at a sugar refinery and a factory, but was not hired. Further discouraged and now almost destitute, he tried to save his dwindling funds by taking a $1.25 a week eight-by-six cell-like room and lived on bread and milk (Swanberg, p. 103).[25]

In an unpublished, uncompleted manuscript housed in the University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia, entitled An Amateur Laborer Dreiser gives an account of his ordeal. Unable to avail myself of this manuscript I had to lean heavily on Swanberg's and Elias's account of the ordeal based on the unpublished manuscript.

Under such stark economy a crisis was certain. Dreiser, now suffering from malnutrition, dropped in weight from

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[25]Letter from Theodore Dreiser to H. L. Mencken, March 27, 1943, in Robert H. Elias (ed.), Letters of Theodore Dreiser (Philadelphia, 1959), III, p. 980. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Letters, III. Dreiser states it was a $1.50 a week room."

159 to 130 pounds (Swanberg, p. 102). Racked by insomnia and by ghostly dreams when he did chance to sleep, Dreiser

> heard stealthy footfalls, felt his scalp prickle as he sensed that a hand was reaching for him, leaped out of bed to light his gas lamp and find no one there, then sank into his chair in a cold sweat, staring out his window into the darkness, waiting dully for the dawn (Swanberg, p. 103).

A lethargic state of half-wakefulness came over him and brought with it hallucinations. "He saw himself divide into two persons, one a tall selfish individual, the other a silent philosopher who watched his struggles with calm detachment" (Swanberg, p. 103). Dreiser regarded this two-sided soul--one who struggled, and one who watched the struggles with philosophic detachment--as an influence which might save him.

The pains Dreiser had

> felt in his fingertips when he was in Philadelphia now returned with increasing severity. Fingers and also toes burned and blistered. His eyes began to itch and sting; his left eye becoming slightly weaker, losing some of its power of accommodation; and wherever he looked, the angles and lines of houses, streets, pictures, newspaper columns appeared crooked. Moreover, whether he was sitting or standing, he found himself strangely compelled to turn around as though he must go in a circle to bring himself into alighnment with something (Apostle, p. 127).

In An Amateur Laborer manuscript Dreiser talks of this irresistible impulse to walk in a circle as "nothing more nor less than pure insanity" (Swanberg, p. 104).

Attempting to find a means to sustain his life, he "appealed to a charitable organization for a job," sold a poem he had written years before for $10.00, and kept searching for a job at "Brooklyn and Manhattan newspapers, publishers, shops, and factories" without encouragement (Apostle, p. 128).

Yearning to see his sister, Mame, but too proud to ask his family for help during his need, he told her he was doing well when she urged him to stay for dinner at her home one evening. Giving Mame a false address rather than admit his "sordid Ross Street Diggings" he went home to resume picking up from the streets vegetables dropped from wagons bringing produce to the market (Swanberg, p. 104).

> Wearied from his torment and near starvation Dreiser pondered suicide, planned to break a store window so that he would be arrested and fed, then again felt certain that the tall, quiet individual--his Doppleganger--would see him through (Swanberg, p. 104).

When he received a letter from his brother, Paul, asking him to call on him at the Imperial Hotel, Dreiser ignored the letter because he was still angry at Paul for a quarrel that had happened a few years before and felt Paul should come to him (Swanberg, p. 104-105).

In mid-April tormented by despair, facing eviction because he had less money than the next week's rent, physically weakened by a starvation diet, Dreiser headed

for the East River to end it all by plunging in.

The despair which drove Hurstwood to suicide was the despair which Dreiser felt as he meditated gloomily at the river's side. "What's the use?"[26] asked Hurstwood. "What's the use?" asked Dreiser as he reached the lowest ebb after the suppression of Sister Carrie.

Jobless, disillusioned, discouraged, Dreiser in a letter to H. L. Mencken recalls that he had "cursed Life and gone down to the East River from a $1.50 a week room in Brooklyn to a canal dock to quit. My pride and my anger would not let me continue, as I thought" (Letters, III, p. 980). A "lunatic canal boatman ferrying potatoes" wanting Dreiser as a companion called out to him that he thought Dreiser was trying to run away from his wife. Dreiser's wife "was in the west living on her parents" while Dreiser who had only 15 cents in his pocket was struggling and starving alone in Brooklyn. The incongruity of this sally brought Dreiser ironic laughter and a change of mood which saved him from suicide and gave him a glimmer of hope (Letters, III, pp. 980-981).

He applied for work with the New York Central Railroad known for giving help to writers and was promised a job

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[26]Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (New York, 1917), p. 554.

the following Monday. He pawned his gold watch and now had money for food and rent. By chance he encountered Paul as he passed the Imperial Hotel.

Paul, shocked by his gauntness and recognizing his plight, gave him money and made arrangements to send him to a Westchester sanitarium run by William Muldoon--the ex-wrestler whose character sketch Dreiser later captured under the title of "Culhane, The Solid Man" in Twelve Men.[27] Dreiser remained under Muldoon's care from April 21 to June 2, 1903 (McAleer, p. 40).

Dreiser opens the character sketch by saying that he met Culhane (Muldoon) "in connection with a psychic depression which only partially reflected itself in my physical condition. I might say I was sick spiritually" (Twelve Men, p. 134).

Muldoon, a dominating personality who believed a rigorous regime of disciplined actions would cure physical deterioration and mental depression, operated the sanitarium to rebuild or repair men who had damaged their health by high living. Using a discipline that bordered on savagery Muldoon could give a grilling tongue-lashing. After

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[27]Theodore Dreiser, Twelve Men (New York, 1919), pp. 134-186. Hereafter this reference will be cited in the text as Twelve Men.

receiving his first tongue-lashing, the embarrassed Dreiser "crept shamefacedly and beaten from the scene" (Twelve Men, p. 146).

On another occasion, Dreiser received a calling down for daily switching his small potato with a table-mate for a larger one. Savagely Muldoon referred to Dreiser as a boob who

> hasn't strength of will or character enough to keep himself in good health and has to be brought up here by his brother, hasn't brains enough to see that when I plan a thing for his benefit it is for his benefit, and not mine (Twelve Men, p. 172).

Under the strict supervision of Muldoon, Dreiser began to sleep better, regain some of his lost weight and respond with interest to the events going on about him. A renewed vitality caused a return of confidence as Dreiser began to recover from his debilitation.

Dreiser leaving the Westchester sanitarium on June 2 after six weeks treatment again applied to the New York Central for a job and was put to work as a manual laborer. Persevering in the physically demanding job of laborer, Dreiser aggressively continued to fight his way back to physical stamina and restored mental health.

On Christmas eve, 1903, he bade farewell to Burke, the Irish foreman, for whom Dreiser was working as a clerical assistant on the New York Central. After three wasted

years, years filled with despair following the suppression of Sister Carrie, Dreiser resigned from the railroad and resolved he would again write.

> After a long battle I am once more the possessor of health.... All that is, now passes before me a rich varied and beautiful procession. I have fought a battle for the right to live and for the present, musing with stilled nerves and a serene gaze, I seem the victor (Swanberg, p. 108, quoted from Laborer, Preface).

The man who had depended so much on success he felt he couldn't live without it, the man who had an obsessive fear of failure, the man almost destroyed by the suppression of Sister Carrie was now on the road back to fame, fortune, and his sought-after success.

During the years from 1904 to 1910 Dreiser established himself as a successful editor and advanced from editing dime novels in 1904 to editing the Butterick "Trio" with a circulation of nearly one million in 1910 (McAleer, p. xi).

On May 18, 1907 after Dreiser purchased a one-third interest in B. W. Dodge Company, Sister Carrie was reissued by the company. This time the novel was advertised and accepted. Dreiser after an entire decade of confused activity had achieved his rightful place as an American author.

The man who published no novels for a period of ten years after the suppression of Sister Carrie published his

second novel Jennie Gerhardt in 1911. Dreiser was now on his way toward becoming the successful novelist he had so long dreamed of becoming.

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APPENDIX

The following chronology was taken from John J. McAleer, Theodore Dreiser (New York, 1968), pp. x-xii.

CHRONOLOGY

1871 Herman Theodore Dreiser born August 27, in Terre Haute, Indiana, to John Paul Dreiser, a German immigrant, and Sarah Maria Schanab Dreiser.

1879-1884 Lived with family, in grinding poverty, in Vincennes, Sullivan, and Evansville, Indiana; in Chicago and, finally, in Warsaw, Indiana.

1886-1887 Attended high school in Warsaw. In the summer of 1887 broke off his education to seek work in Chicago.

1889 Entered Indiana University in September.

1890 Sarah Dreiser died, in Chicago.

1892 Joined the staff of the Chicago Globe in the spring. In November went to St. Louis to work for the Globe-Democrat.

1893 Became drama critic of Globe-Democrat. Transferred to staff of St. Louis Republic. Fell in love with a country schoolteacher, Sara Osborne White, twenty-seven months his senior.

1894 Set out for New York. Formed fast friendship with Arthur Henry, city editor of the Toledo Blade. Joined staff of the Pittsburgh Dispatch. Read Balzac's Human Comedy, Spencer's First Principles, and Huxley's Science and Christianity, and abandoned Catholicism in favor of mechanistic determinism. In November found employment with the New York World.

1895-1897 Edited Ev'ry Month under aegis of his brother, the song writer Paul Dresser.

1898 Served as consulting editor for Ainslee's and Success magazines. Married to Sara White.

1899 Began writing short stories at Arthur Henry's home in Maumee, Ohio, in July. In September began *Sister Carrie*.

1900 *Sister Carrie* given token publication by Doubleday, Page and Company. John Paul Dreiser died.

1901-1903 Began *Jennie Gerhardt*. Suffered mental breakdown. Started comeback as assistant feature editor, New York *Daily News*.

1904-1905 Joined Street & Smith, editing dime novels. Named editor of *Smith's Magazine*.

1906 Edited *Broadway Magazine*. Paul Dresser died.

1907 Became editor of Butterick "Trio." (*Delineator*, *Designer*, *New Idea Woman's Magazine*) with a combined circulation of nearly one million.

1908 Friendship with H. L. Mencken began when Mencken became a contributor to the *Delineator*. Conferred with Theodore Roosevelt, at the White House, on founding the National Child Rescue League.

1910 Dismissed from Butterick editorships in October.

1911 *Jennie Gerhardt* published. Departed in November for six-month stay in Europe.

1912 *The Financier* published.

1913 *A Traveler at Forty* published.

1914 *The Titan* published. Final separation from Sara White Dreiser.

1915 Traveled in August and September on two-thousand-mile automobile tour through Indiana and adjacent states. *The 'Genius'* published.

1916 *Plays of the Natural and Supernatural* published. *The 'Genius'*, attacked by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, became a *cause celebre*.

1918 *Free and Other Stories* and *The Hand of the Potter* published.

1919 Twelve Men published. Took as his mistress Helen Patges Richardson, his mother's grand-niece. Settled with her in California.

1920 Hey, Rub-A-Dub-Dub published. An American Tragedy begun the following summer.

1922 A Book About Myself (Newspaper Days) published.

1923 The Color of a Great City published. Returned to New York to research An American Tragedy.

1925 An American Tragedy published in two volumes.

1926 From June to October toured Scandinavia, Germany, France, and England, with Helen.

1927-1928 Departed on eleven-week visit to U.S.S.R. Sole meeting with Hemingway, in Paris. Published Chains and Moods, Cadenced and Declaimed. Published Dreiser Looks at Russia.

1929 A Gallery of Women published. Settled at Mt. Kisco, New York, at "Iroki."

1931 Dawn published. In November led Dreiser Committee to Kentucky to inquire into labor unrest in Harlan County.

1932-1934 Tragic America published. Served as co-editor of American Spectator with James Branch Cabell, George Jean Nathan, and Eugene O'Neill.

1938 Attended International Peace Conference in Paris in July. Visited Barcelona to witness last week of the siege. In September conferred with Franklin Roosevelt, on Spanish Relief. In December settled in Glendale, California, with Helen.

1939 The Living Thoughts of Thoreau published.

1941 America Is Worth Saving published.

1942 Agreed to send papers to University of Pennsylvania. Barred from speaking in Toronto, in September, by Ontario's Attorney General. Suffered a coronary occlusion. Sara White Dreiser died in St. Louis.

1944 Presented Award of Merit Medal by American Academy of Arts & Letters. Married Helen Richardson in Stevenson, Washington on June 13.

1945 Applied for membership in Communist Party, July 20. Completed The Bulwark in May; a week later began work on The Stoic. Died of heart failure, December 28, in Hollywood.

1946 The Bulwark published.

1947 The Stoic published.

1955 Helen Dreiser died, September 22; buried beside Dreiser at Forest Lawn. University of Pennsylvania received Notes on Life, the huge, unfinished philosophic-scientific treatise which had held Dreiser's attention during the last fifteen years of his life.

APPENDIX

SISTER CARRIE (1900)

This list of book reviews and notices was taken from Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro (eds.), The Stature of Theodore Dreiser (Indiana, 1955), pp. 288-289.

Book Reviews and Notices

from publishing date to January 1902

Anon. Churchman, December 29, 1900.
_____. Current Literature, January, 1901.
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Louisville Times, November 20, 1900.
Detroit Free Press, November 24, 1900.
Chicago Daily News, November 30, 1900.
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Hartford Courant, December 6, 1900.
Toledo Blade, December 8, 1900.
N. Y. Commercial Advertiser, December 19, 1900.
Albany Journal, December 22, 1900.
Omaha Daily Bee, December 22, 1900.
Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, December 28, 1900.
San Francisco Chronicle, December 30, 1900.
St. Louis Mirror, January 3, 1901.
New Haven Journal Courier, January 12, 1901.
Indianapolis Journal, January 14, 1901.
Chicago Chronicle, January 14, 1901.

Chicago Times Herald, January 16, 1901.
Denver Republican, January 20, 1901.
Seattle Post Intelligence, January 20, 1901.
Minneapolis Journal, January 26, 1901.
Syracuse Post-Standard, c. February, 1901. University of Pennsylvania Dreiser Collection.
Louisville Courier-Journal, February 23, 1901.
Chicago Tribune, February 25, 1901.
Indianapolis News, March 9, 1901.
London Daily Mail, August 13, 1901.
Newark Sunday News, September 1, 1901.
N. Y. Commercial Advertiser, September 18, 1901.
St. Louis Post Dispatch, January 26, 1902.

There were no reviews from January 26, 1902 until 1907 when Sister Carrie was reissued.

Compilation of book reviews and notices appearing by month:

1900	1
November 1900	6
December 1900	9
January 1901	11
February 1901	4
March 1901	4
August 1901	1
September 1901	3
January 1902	1
	40