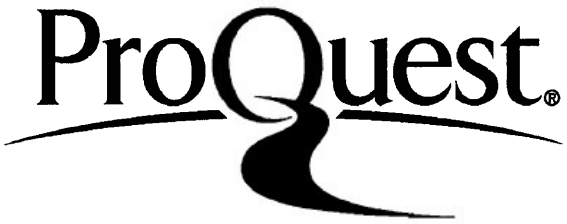
THEODORE DREISER'S SISTER CARRIE: A STUDY OF TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE IN THE ARTISTIC FEMININE PSYCHE

Karen J. Pietkiewicz©
671 Lennox Avenue
Sault Ste. Marie
Ontario P6C 3P9

Dr. Claude Liman
English Department
Graduate Studies
Lakehead University
Thunder Bay, Ontario



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Introduction

Theodore Dreiser's novel SISTER CARRIE is almost untouched by modern literary criticism in spite of the fact that it has been in print for ninety years. This unique situation has resulted because the original novel, published in 1900 by Doubleday, was intrusively censored and heavily edited to the point where the characters are significantly altered. The Pennsylvania Edition, published in 1981, is the first to restore original materials and make possible a more accurate study of the novel.

This study, incorporating Jungian and archetypal concepts, examines the character of Carrie Meeber in light of that new edition. Chapter I compares the Doubleday and Pennsylvania editions to show that intrusive editing did indeed alter Carrie's character into a facsimile of her original self. It shows how the power of Dreiser's language was diminished, and how the balance between characters in the novel was affected.

Chapter II concentrates on the difficulties Dreiser encountered in attempting to publish SISTER CARRIE -- difficulties that led to some of the editing problems discussed in Chapter I.[1] Criticism of the original Doubleday edition is also examined, showing how it is often inconsistent with Dreiser's restored text and thus presents an inadequate and sometimes distorted view of Carrie.

Chapter III portrays Carrie's emerging artistic psyche and the beginning of her transformation from an unsophisticated country girl to a perceptive, intelligent, and talented actress. Barriers of class structure that stand in her way are dissolved as she struggles for a place in a material world. Her audacious participation in the relationship with Charles Drouet eventually results in her introduction to the theatre and the world of acting, but the social and moral balance for which she longs remains unsatisfied. In her dissatisfaction she then leaves Drouet for the sophisticated and more devious George Hurstwood.

Chapter IV takes Carrie from Chicago to New York and from her apprenticeship in the theatre to an apprenticeship in human nature. Hurstwood takes over from Drouet as Carrie's mentor, deceiving the unsuspecting Carrie, who must learn to perceive truth through the illusion of appearances. Mrs. Vance enters, serving as a guide, reintroducing Carrie to the world of theatre and to Robert Ames. As Hurstwood fails completely, Carrie calls on her acting experience for support. She learns new and needed skills; her disillusionment with Hurstwood is balanced by her growing self-confidence as an actress.

While the glitter of the theatre world now pulls at Carrie, her compassionate awareness of Hurstwood's failure grooms her for the reappearance of Ames. Ames then assumes the role of mentor, directing Carrie to the meaning of her calling and the true significance of art.

The Coda speculates on a future relationship between Carrie and Ames, considering this relationship as a symbol of artistic and spiritual wholeness. Carrie's personal experience has prepared her to be a medium of artistic expression for the world.

Footnotes to Introduction

[1.] There is an unavoidable overlap in chronology here that forces me to repeat portions of my discussion.

Chapter I

The Pennsylvania Edition of SISTER CARRIE

The Pennsylvania edition of SISTER CARRIE has made possible a study of the emerging artistic consciousness of Carrie Meeber.[1] Such a study depends upon this edition because Carrie is portrayed as a significantly different character here than she was in the expurgated, often flawed Doubleday text that until 1981 was considered authoritative. Previous to the publication of the carefully-composed Pennsylvania edition, readers and critics responded to a facsimile of Carrie Meeber and not to the character Dreiser originally created in his manuscript. The character most critics responded to lacked depth and dimension when compared to the fullness of character presented in the Pennsylvania edition. Carrie's personal adaptation to her new life in Chicago, through her choice of living arrangements, employment, clothing and entertainment, is enhanced and given further direction by the reinsertion, in this new edition, of deleted portions. Even her choice of male companions reflects a dimension and meaning that is missing in the Doubleday edition. Throughout Carrie's development in the Pennsylvania edition, her character is shown growing in the direction of artistic self-expression; each choice she makes is in response to a deep longing for a life of truth, beauty, and freedom. A resolution to her longing, and ultimately to her

character, emerges in the Pennsylvania edition through Carrie's artistic aspirations in the world of theatre, and through her heightened appreciation of the power and meaning of creative expression.

With the publication of the Pennsylvania Edition of SISTER CARRIE, the first thorough study of the novel from the original manuscript was made possible. Previous to this, the critics often relied upon the Doubleday edition as a basis for comment. The unfortunate probability is that most readers, and many critics, were reacting to the significantly edited, all-but-censored edition of SISTER CARRIE and did not experience the novel as Dreiser wrote it or intended it to be.

What they read was the conservatively-biased edition of Dreiser's wife, "Jug", and of his close friend Arthur Henry. In addition, unattended transcription errors and surreptitious selected editing by the publisher made further inroads into Dreiser's original work.

Dreiser began SISTER CARRIE in 1899, and drew heavily on his knowledge of contemporary city life, as well as on his personal experiences in Chicago and New York (p.506P). His aim, partly a reflection of his extensive reading of Balzac, was the realistic presentation of Carrie Meeber in the city of Chicago (p.506P).

Dreiser also drew from his childhood experiences, most particularly from an incident involving his sister Emma (p.506P). She had become embroiled in a scandalous love affair (p.506P); her

lover then stole a substantial sum of money, with which the two of them left town.

From this series of events Dreiser formulated a novel that overwhelmed the original situation in scope and depth. It became a character portrayal of Carrie Meeber which surpassed in realism and intensity the literary counterparts of the day. Naturalist writers such as Zola, Norris, and Crane seemed unable to depict a potential that included individual choice. Steeped in a conditioned sexual morality that circumscribed women within specific roles and behaviours, the Naturalists saw the social consequences of immoral behaviour as fixed and insurmountable, and wrote from within that view. Therefore, characters such as Crane's Maggie were predetermined as lost to irremediable and ungovernable forces.

Dreiser's audacious presentation of a fallen woman who achieved other than suffering, degradation, or the accustomed untimely demise shattered the composure of the publishing world.

Of continued significance, however, is the fact that the novel, before being published, had been subjected to careless, insensitive, and often heavy editing by people other than Dreiser himself. Neda M. Westlake, General Editor of the Pennsylvania edition, states:

> Dreiser's wife and his friend Arthur Henry cut and revised the manuscript and typescript. The typists and the publisher's house editors made further changes. The SISTER CARRIE that was published in November 1900 was marred by this editorial interference and censorship and has

been the basis of American editions and foreign translations until the present.[2]

The indiscriminate editing of the novel diminished the effectiveness of Dreiser's powerful language. The Doubleday edition becomes "a pastiche" (p.581P) of editorial interference, "altering and often emasculating the original writing" (p.581P). One of the goals of the Pennsylvania Edition, we are told, was "the preservation, wherever possible, of Dreiser's original prose, with its awkward power and forcefulness intact" (p.581P).

The Pennsylvania Edition of SISTER CARRIE, through the work of Neda M. Westlake and Stephen C. Brennan (p.536P, note 10), presents the conclusion that during the writing of SISTER CARRIE, Dreiser had the habit of submitting his chapters to the regular scrutiny of his wife, Jug, and his friend Arthur Henry. This habit resulted in a manuscript that "exhibits, in nearly every chapter, markings by both" (p.507P). While most of Jug's alterations were minor, many of Arthur Henry's changes affected both meaning and characterization, even though Henry appears not to have even read the manuscript thoroughly (p.507P).

A complete comparison between the two editions must be left for a study with this specific purpose. However, it is important to recognize the impact which deletions of the sort Henry made had on Carrie's character. Henry's cuts in the following passage drain emotional depth and sensitivity from Dreiser's presentation of Carrie. The Doubleday edition tells us that

Carrie now felt the problem of winter clothes.

> What was she to do? She had no winter jacket, no hat, no shoes. It was difficult to speak to Minnie about this, but at last she summoned the courage.[3]

It sounds here as though Carrie were only concerned about the impending winter, and about her problem of clothes, and that, though reluctant to broach the subject, she eventually did so of necessity. In the manuscript, however, and the Pennsylvania edition, we read Dreiser's full comment, wherein he gives not only the reason for her need, the oncoming winter, but the length of time it would take her to earn the money for these clothes. He shows us, by implication, that Carrie suffered the chill of at least several winter mornings before she could even mention her need, since she lacked the courage to approach her sister. It shows that she was timid to the point of going chilled before she would finally ask for money even for very real needs. Arthur Henry's now-reinstated cut adds dimension to Carrie:

> She [Carrie] thought some of asking Minnie to let her keep her money and buy these things [clothes]. She would need to work a whole month before she would have enough to do anything with. Once she resolved to ask Minnie but every time it came to the point of doing so, she lacked courage to bring it up. The increasingly cool mornings constantly reminded her. (p.56P)

Carrie's interest in clothing is clearly shown to be rooted in need. It is the depth and detail of this need that is omitted in the Doubleday edition. The fact that Carrie likes pretty clothing often overshadows this basic need as the novel moves forward in the initial chapters. Even accepting the clothing money from Drouet,

as she eventually does, acquires a different meaning without the reinforcement of her need that Dreiser chose to emphasize, and that Henry deleted.

In another cut, one of the first important references Dreiser makes about Carrie's basic character is also omitted. In a passage initially about Drouet, Dreiser uses Carrie's interaction with Drouet as a way of validating his -- Drouet's -- character. In this edited passage there remain only inferences in regard to Carrie's judgement; since Carrie trusted Drouet enough to take money from him, Drouet must be a decent person, and, conversely, Carrie must herself be decent and trustworthy (p.64P). But in the restored text of the Pennsylvania edition, Dreiser goes on to tell us something about the underpinnings of her trust and the basis of her judgement. He tells us that Carrie possesses an intuitive inner knowledge as true as the ordered, visible logic experienced in the structured world. This inner voice, if we may call it that, helps to shape her basic character, and validates such actions as her acceptance of clothing money from Drouet. The force within Carrie that keeps her "whole" (p.64P), along with other of God's creatures, is referred to by Dreiser in the Pennsylvania edition as "the religious expression of a material and spiritual truth that has guided the evolution of the race" (p.64P). This passage, omitted in the Doubleday edition, was meant to tell us that Carrie has some innate truth upon which she bases her actions; further to that, it is a truth that guides the very evolution of our race.

The entire uncut passage in the Pennsylvania edition reads:

> 'He keepeth His creatures whole' was not written of beasts alone. That is but the religious expression of the race. If not, then what led and schooled the race before it thought logically -- before it came into the wisdom to lead itself? Carrie was unwise, and therefore like the sheep in its unwisdom, strong in feeling. (p.64P)

Dreiser seems to be telling us that Carrie is capable of making a distinction between good and bad actions. By virtue of her innate honesty, it seems that her discrimination is somehow more finely honed -- or perhaps less dulled -- than most, and allows her to make ultimately wise choices through whatever means are available to her. But after Henry's cuts, the abbreviated passage is reduced in meaning: "'He keepeth His creatures whole' was not written for beasts alone. Carrie was unwise, and therefore like the sheep in its unwisdom, strong in feeling" (p.49D). Dreiser's qualifying statement of Carrie's inner truth -- originally inserted between "alone" and "Carrie" -- is gone. The characteristic of Carrie Meeber that seems, in her case, to protect her -- and perhaps make the acquired wisdom of experience superfluous -- is reduced to an unexplained feeling without reference to Dreiser's explanation of spiritual truth.

Carrie's character in the novel is further diminished by Henry's deletion of a sizeable passage, now reinserted in the Pennsylvania edition on page 91, lines 7 to 28. The passage is significant because it indicates Dreiser's recognition of a duality

within Carrie. As a result of her experiences, Carrie is now "altogether so turned about in all of her earthly relationships that she might as well have been a new and different individual" (p.89P). In her mirror she sees "a prettier Carrie" than she had seen before (p.89P). In her mind, "a mirror prepared of her own and the world's opinions, [she] saw a worse. Between these two images she wavered, hesitating which to believe" (p.89P). The one image seems to represent Carrie's new desires and her instinct; the other, "not interested to praise", is her conscience, which "represented the world, her past environment, habit, [and] convention in a confused, reflected way" (p.89P). In this long passage, which does not appear in the Doubleday edition, Carrie, the "new and different individual", talks with the "secret voice" (p.89P) of her conscience. It is a dialogue much like that in Yeats's "Dialogue of Self and Soul", for Carrie must somehow escape the "mirror of malicious eyes".[4] Dreiser has previously told us this voice "was no just and sapient counsellor" (p.89P); it has its source in those days "during which the sun withholds a portion of our allowance for light and warmth" (p.91P). All statements issuing from the voice of Carrie's conscience reflect the values of the external world. This voice calls Carrie a "dawdler"; it reminds her of how "men look upon what" she "has done". It tells her, "'Out, woman! Into the streets! Preferably be wretched'" (p.91P)! Carrie struggles beseechingly with the dour "secret voice" (p.89P) -- a voice that could easily be construed as that of

acquired guilt. She struggles to defend herself against the harsh, demeaning criticisms levelled at her -- criticisms which reflect the collective voice and the response of a critical society. Through Carrie's lamentations and sufferings in this section, we see that she agonizes over her choices and is much aware of the world's opinion. We also see the depth of her concern and fear, in contrast to the callous, unconscionable and opportunistic Carrie some critics and readers have chosen to see in the Doubleday edition. We see both sensitivity and honesty in Carrie Meeber, responses to life that seem to be the result of her realistic vision. These essential qualities are needed by a society often lacking in compassion and understanding - - a society that requires the truth Carrie reveals and which evolves through the creative voice of all its Carrie Meebers.

But in the Doubleday edition, Carrie's dialogue with the voice of her conscience is reduced from 127 words to a single word question: "Why" (p.70D)?

An important passage about the forces that act on Carrie Meeber from without is contained in the beginning paragraphs of the Pennsylvania Edition's Chapter XI. Dreiser explains how Carrie's "mental state, the culmination of [her] reasoning" (p. 97P), is influenced and affected by her surroundings. "In the progress of all such minds environment is a subtle, pervasive control. It works hand and hand with desire" (p.97P).

As the chapter unfolds we see Carrie quickly learn, through

Drouet, how women are judged by men according to how they look. Drouet's tactless comparisons are not lost upon Carrie:

> [She] looked and well remembered. She owed her keen impression as much to Drouet's outspoken feelings as to the appearance of the objects [the fine carriage, prancing horses, large home] themselves. She was being branded like wax by a scene which only made poor clothes, worn shoes, shop application and poverty in general seem more dire, more degraded, more and more impossible. How would she not like to have something like this? (p.101P)

In the Doubleday edition, by comparison, one and one half pages of this passage referring to Carrie were cut by Henry, who begins Chapter X1 with, "Carrie was an apt student of fortune's ways" (p.75D). This abrupt statement lends itself easily to the interpretation that Carrie Meeber is something of a "fortune hunter", when in fact we have seen that Carrie's lesson is one of unpleasant truth: for most of the world, a pleasing physical appearance and the accoutrements of wealth are considered desirable, and she has neither. The distance between the good life Drouet so crassly points out, and that which Carrie has at the time, makes the desired state seem always out of reach like the carrot on the proverbial stick, for Drouet, like many men, "had but one idol -- the perfect woman" (p.105P).

We can see through the reinstatement of these deleted passages that Dreiser takes great pains to show that Carrie's motivation stems from not only her basic needs, but from her love of beauty, refinement, and perfection.

Henry's editing is most serious in the chapters about the

interaction between Carrie Meeber and George Hurstwood, for it is in the juxtapositioning of Carrie Meeber's moral character with that of George Hurstwood that Dreiser best exhibits the contrast in their positions. The moral strength of the novel is best seen in these chapters dealing with the foil relationship between Dreiser's two central characters. Thus Henry's cuts to both Hurstwood's characterization and Carrie's not only subtly diminish Carrie's moral position, and enhance Hurstwood's, but further induce in the reader a devaluation of Carrie Meeber by virtue of the contrast itself.

Carrie's seduction by Hurstwood is a slow, downward cycle infused by Hurstwood's "stress of desire" (p.128P). Under this influence, Dreiser tells us, "he waxed eloquent" (p.128P). The power of his position, the practised color of his voice calculated to impress, is not shown to full effect in the Doubleday edition. What we are given is often a blase foreshortening of what was a revealing and mitigating description by Dreiser. Both editions, when speaking of Hurstwood's effect on Carrie, tell us "It was an important thing to her to hear one so well-positioned and powerful speaking in this manner" (p.96D, 128P). The next Doubleday paragraph reads:

> Behold, he had ease and comfort, his strength was great, his position high, his clothing rich, and yet he was appealing to her. She could formulate no thought which would be just and right. She troubled herself no more upon the matter. (p.96D)

From this it sounds as though Hurstwood were calling to her, and

whether it were right or wrong was of no concern to her. In the Pennsylvania edition, however, the original passage, reinstated, reads:

> Behold, he had ease and comfort, his strength was great, his position high, his garments rich, and yet he was appealing to her. It affected her much as the magnificence of God affects the mind of the Christian when he reads of His wondrous state and finds at the end an appeal to him to come and make it perfect. (p.129P)

Here, Dreiser's original passage shows the state of awe from which Carrie viewed Hurstwood. The analogy to the Divine that he chose to use intimates that Carrie Meeber profoundly wished, at some level, to associate herself with some form of cosmic perfection.

A number of Arthur Henry's cuts concerned Carrie Meeber's moral stance toward her live-in relationship with Hurstwood. When Henry removed Dreiser's succinct statements, it then appeared as if Carrie did not care if she were married or not. Yet Dreiser had taken pains to tell us that Carrie "was struck, as by a blade, with the miserable provision which was outside the pale of marriage" (p.206P). "The problem of her marriage affected her. She troubled again to secure her rights as a good woman" (p.209P). Other cuts, reinserted, continue to build Carrie's character as Dreiser had intended, showing her sensitivity. After Drouet casts her off in a blaze of consummate hypocrisy for the very dalliances he himself was more prone to, and after Hurstwood has tricked her onto the train with his lies regarding Drouet's illness, Carrie wallows in deep despair. Dreiser tells us Carrie

> had no friends and no acquaintances. It would be a hopeless situation in which she might suffer and come to -- she knew not what. All this affected her deeply, for she was a sensitive soul and grieved over many things. (p.282P)

He continues:

> She knew that even here she was being unjustly dealt with and made baggage of. It was a shame and a disgrace, and yet what could she do? Not infrequently after such meditations, tears came into her eyes and she wept silently. It was all wrong with her, no matter what she tried to do. (p.282P)

It is interesting and cogent to note that the section from which these passages came contains a substantial digression upon the entire circumstance of Carrie's deception by Hurstwood, her accompanying him on the train, and, in contrast, Hurstwood's regret and waffling which, in the Pennsylvania edition, form a part of his character. From this passage Arthur chose to cut almost five full pages in one piece (p.282-287P).

Another, equally cumulative, effect of the manuscript editing was to pare from the novel flamboyant and aggressive words. The Dreiser who could conceive of Hurstwood's wife as a "confounded bitch" (p.641P), for example, was reined in by Jug, who in her own hand selected the word "wretch" (p.641P), thus diminishing the effect and power of Dreiser's language. Other editing attempted to tone down the sexual implications that Dreiser included as a matter of course. The result of some editing was to carefully prune Carrie Meeber's physical self into a more socially acceptable form. Dreiser's words, which are often described as elephantine, doltish, and coarse[5], and which apparently offended Jug's sensibilities,

were replaced time and again with her own. The corsets and laces that bound Carrie into the pleasing form that Dreiser so lavishly praised and the sweet smell of her body he chose to describe were purged from the manuscript. Dreiser tells us, "[h]er dresses draped her becomingly, for she wore excellent corsets and laced herself with care" (p.146P). He further states that Carrie "had always been of cleanly instincts and now that the opportunity afforded, she kept her body sweet" (p.146P). The paragraph on page 146 of the Pennsylvania edition containing this information was cut from the novel, and all the Doubleday edition was left with was commentary on her shoes and her neck pieces and a note that her form was filled "admirably" (p.146D).

One of the most significant omissions from the Doubleday edition is Dreiser's consideration of "Carrie's mental state . her reasoning" (p.97P). Dreiser sees desire as the controlling factor in each life and is concerned that we distinguish between the desire that leads to "accomplishment" in some, and the miscalculating selfishness that "power[s]" others "unchangingly, unpoetically on" (p.97P):

> it is well to remember that in life, after all, we are most wholly controlled by desire. The things that appeal to desire are not always visible objects. Let us not confuse this with selfishness. It is more virtuous than that. Desire is the variable wind which blows . . . filling our sails . . . scudding us now here, now there, speeding us anon to accomplishment; as often, rending our sails, and leaving us battered and dismantled . . . Selfishness is the twin-screw motive power of the human steamer. It drives unchangingly, unpoetically on. Its one danger is that of miscalculation. Personalities such as Carrie's would

come under the former category. (p.97P) [ellipses mine]

By this we see that Dreiser considers Carrie's desire to be a certain 'culmination' of her reasoning, its end result. Carrie's desire is not to be confused with selfishness; desire can be for material goals, but, Dresier tells us, it can equally be for non-material goals. The state of this desire, in Carrie's case, is "more virtuous" than that of selfishness.

Dreiser continues with a discussion of the effect of environment on the process of desire within a mind like Carrie's. He tells us that environment "is a subtle, persuasive control" that "works hand in hand with desire" (p.97P):

> by certain conditions which her intellect was scarcely able to control, she was pushed into a situation where for the first time she could see a strikingly different way of living from her own. Fine clothes, rich foods, superior residence, . . . If the sight of them aroused a desire in her bosom, is it strange? (p.97P) [ellipses mine]

After telling us that her desire is the more virtuous path, he refers to her relationship with Drouet and asks us "to admit the possibility of persuasion and control other than by men. Did Drouet persuade her entirely? Ah, the magnitude attributed to simple Drouet! The leading strings were with neither of them" (p.98P). What Dreiser seems to be implying is that Carrie's desire serves as a type of a "calling" to her; he further seems to be indicating that her sexual liaison is not due to a mindless seduction but is part of the path she has set upon by virtue of this calling. For he has cautioned the reader succinctly against

condemning Carrie or Drouet:

> Too often we move along ignoring the fact of our own advantages in every criticism we make concerning others. We do this because we are ignorant of the subtleties of life. Be sure that the vileness which you attribute to that object is a mirage. It is a sky illumination of your own lack of understanding -- the confusion of your own soul. (p.98P)

The effect of eliminating from the novel the passage which included these four excerpts is to remove the orientation Dreiser included as a guide to the situational ethic within which Carrie Meeber moved at the time. The result, in the Doubleday version, takes the reader directly from Carrie's introduction to Hurstwood to a discussion of her material desires, with no tempering interlude to soften, enrich, or explain her behaviours. The Doubleday novel moves from Chapter 10 to Chapter 11 with no intervening commentary. Chapter 10 concludes with,

> 'There's a nice man,' he [Drouet] remarked to Carrie as they returned to their cosy chamber.
> 'A good friend of mine, too.'
> 'He seems to be,' said Carrie. (p.75D)

Chapter 11 begins with: "Carrie was an apt student of fortune's ways -- of fortune's superficialities" (p.75D).

The omitted section served as the first paragraphs of Chapter 11 and prefaced the discussion of Carrie's relationship to the material world. The implication of the remaining paragraphs, as well as the word order, results in confusion that connects Carrie's meeting of Hurstwood with her previously expressed desire for material things. Thus the reader is easily led to assume a more

selfish motive on Carrie's part than Dreiser intended.

The cumulative effect of other editorial deletions removes much of Dreiser's concern with the question of value and the struggle Carrie undergoes to put her principles into practice without compromising herself morally, socially, or economically. Carrie's marital non-status, an example, has been examined in the quotations previously studied. The question of her social/sexual mores is also reflected in other quotations, such as her assessment of a particularly salacious individual with whom she comes in contact during her job interviews. The Doubleday edition tells us nothing at all with regard to Carrie's perceptions at the time, yet the observation Dreiser attributed to her in the manuscript reveals her moral bearings:

> Besides [Carrie] had no liking for the man, who was a stout, overexperienced, fakish sort of an individual, who had one type of woman in mind when the name of woman was mentioned, and was forever on the qui vive for some little encounter with the fair sex which might work to his advantage. She therefore gave the Standard a wide berth, even in thought. (p.250P)

The words "even in thought" emphasize the extent Carrie will go to avoid sexual situations; the passage supports a positive image of Carrie.

Other moral stances, cut from the Doubleday, are developed in the manuscript and preserved in the Pennsylvania edition. Many of these positions are presented through Dreiser's commentary. Several sections offer a contrast in character and moral posturing between both Drouet and Hurstwood on the one hand and Carrie on the

other. Aspects of their character, compared to Carrie's, lend credibility to the idea that Carrie has a far more discriminating moral stance. Drouet, who in the Doubleday edition is presented as a good-natured, carefree fellow, albeit a ladies' man, is shown to be far more centripetal and self-serving in the Pennsylvania edition. He is also shown to be a sexual hypocrite. For when Drouet finds out that Carrie had met Hurstwood, if only for a walk in the park, his indignation knows no end. In view of his own checkered past, here is a Drouet whose double standard overwhelms even himself. "'She had to go knocking around with people'", Drouet fumes (p.246P). He continues: "'Oh, Lord, to think a woman should do a man like that. And Carrie too -- little Carrie'. He would never have thought anything like that of her" (p.246P). Even the next day his hypocritical rage is unabated; he "found no cessation of feeling concerning what he considered Carrie's perfidy" (p.246P). Henry deleted this revealing passage from the novel as well.

With regard to Hurstwood's moral character, Dreiser is far more direct. The Hurstwood of social standing and prestige is seen in a much different light when the deleted passages are restored. The Pennsylvania edition (Chapter Xll) restores these cuts which had been so extensive as to accelerate the Doubleday chapters. Among the deleted passages, Dreiser wrote four paragraphs comparing Drouet's and Hurstwood's relationships with women in general and with Carrie in particular (p.105-106P). It is a

dialogue on behaviour, and amounts to a discussion of what we would basically call sexual morality. Dreiser summarizes by telling us that, for Drouet, "Women were made for men -- and there was an end to it. The glance of a coquettish eye was sufficient reason for any deviltry. He had no other conception of its meaning" (p.106P).

Hurstwood was altogether a different case:

> [He], however, was a man who was less light-minded, and consequently more subtle. He saw a trifle more clearly the necessities of our social organization, but he was more unscrupulous in sinning against it. He did not, as a matter of fact, conduct himself so loosely as Drouet, but it was entirely owing to a respect for his situation. In the actual matter of a decision and a consummation, he was worse than Drouet. He more deliberately set aside the canons of right as he understood them. (p.106P)

We can see here that both were attracted to sexual sport, but one was light-hearted about it while the other, Hurstwood, seemed a more callous predator. In either case, the fact that both are interested in sex without commitment places them at a level of self-seeking that differs from Carrie's simpler, more pragmatic needs. But Hurstwood's poor ethical stance, as presented by Dreiser in the deleted passages, seems to indicate that Hurstwood raises the more serious moral question. While both men may at least be intensely interested in Carrie's beauty, and, while they obviously value their personal freedom, they both fall short in the area of truth.

In the end, it is difficult to place Carrie Meeber in the category of sexual opportunist, or to criticize her for the actions she takes to provide for herself, when her conduct is compared to

that of both Drouet and Hurstwood. We must recall the fact that the economic, social, and moral balance of power lay with Drouet and Hurstwood, rather than with Carrie. Carrie found herself in a situation that involved her basic self-expression, and the choice she made can easily be described as a creative compromise, especially in view of her ultimate triumph. She had managed to leave behind the grim existence of Minnie's life, the debasing employment that would have been her lot, and much of her poverty. Thus, with the emendations available to us through the Pennsylvania edition, certain critical studies, to be discussed in detail, that depicted her as a dimmed, unfocused, and instinctive opportunist lose textual support. Dreiser takes explicit steps to explain Carrie Meeber's perceptions and actions as adjuncts to a desire he experienced as a positive force.

Dreiser's peculiar self-effacement in submitting his work to the scrutiny of his wife and friend seems almost prophetic in light of the poor commercial reception of the novel, and leads one to speculate whether Dreiser was concerned with the precociousness of his theme, with his weighty style, or with his habitually poor spelling and grammar (p.507P). Biographers and critics have suggested that Dreiser was "too undisciplined to edit his own prose carefully" (p.512P). However, the Pennsylvania edition studies of the manuscript show that this was not true:

> In working through the Mallon typescript, Dreiser was clearly aware of the clumsiness of some of his writing and concentrated on revising many awkward spots. He changed individual readings, cut

> unnecessary wordiness, broke up long and unwieldy sentences and polished rough phrasing. He also did some preliminary cutting. His numerous changes show careful attention to style and tone. (p.513P)

The most significant revision in the novel -- and the most controversial -- is the revision and change of the original ending, wherein there is an attraction between Carrie and Ames in the penultimate chapter, followed by Hurstwood's suicide in the last chapter. In the Doubleday edition the attraction between Carrie and Ames was "destroyed" (p.516P); "there is only a spark of interest which quickly dies, leaving Carrie puzzled and dissatisfied" (p.516P). Hurstwood's suicide is then followed by a two page "meandering philosophical statement" (p.517P) to which has been tacked on an edited version of the "blind strivings" (p.369D) coda from the earlier chapter. The revised ending requires a full study, and thus cannot be dealt with here; what is important is the original ending as presented in the Pennsylvania Edition. In Chapter XLIX of this version, Dreiser focuses on an electric attraction between Carrie Meeber and Ames in which they discuss her future on the stage and the focus of her art. Dreiser presents an unfolding and deepening relationship between Carrie and Ames -- a relationship that flowers through their serious, thoughtful conversation on the nature and meaning of an artistic calling. Ames's soliloquy on the significance of the artist in society (p.485P) is a powerful statement of moral value and meaning. It both supports and directs an evaluation of Carrie Meeber that is

positive and uplifting. In the Pennsylvania edition, Dreiser tells us that Carrie Meeber's presence erased Ames' preconceived negative notions:

> all he felt concerning the moral status of certain types of actresses fled. There was something exceedingly human and unaffected about this woman -- something which craved neither money nor praise. He followed her to the door -- wide awake to her beauty. (487P)

The Pennsylvania edition, in presenting an embellished relationship between Ames and Carrie, implies the distinct possibility of a developing relationship between the two (p.534P). This is in significant contrast to the Carrie of the Doubleday edition who is to long "alone" and only "dream such happiness", a happiness that she will "never feel" (p.369D). Further, for Carrie to be attracted to a man of Ames' character, refinement, and artistic sensibility, and for Ames to reciprocate her interest, would seem to indicate like sensibilities in Carrie herself.

In Dreiser's original manuscript, which ended at Chapter L with Hurstwood's suicide in a bleak picture of defeat and despair, Chapter XLlX becomes the chapter that concludes Carrie's characterization. In this penultimate chapter, approximately six pages parallel the Doubleday edition. From page 478 on, however, major change occurs. The Doubleday edition omits a significant passage wherein Carrie converses with Mrs. Vance and learns that Ames is successfully pursuing his career out West. Carrie shows definite interest in Bob Ames. It is at this very point that the

editing becomes intrusive, and almost in opposition to Dreiser's original work. We are told on page 478 of the Pennsylvania edition that Carrie showed "clear interest" in details concerning Ames (p.478P). The following nine complete pages concern an evening of dialogue between Carrie and Ames that show a definite personal interest between them. The pages are filled with comments by both Carrie and Ames that indicate a mutual admiration and growing romantic desire. We are told that Carrie "arrayed herself with particular care for the dinner with Ames; she gave him "a merry smile" (p.479P). We learn that "she had dressed thus carefully for him" (p.480P). The interest is reciprocal; Ames announces to Carrie, "'Oh, it isn't the play that I care about'", and tells her, "'it's you I'm coming to see'" (p.480P). Dreiser tells us, "He looked at her as one does a bouquet of flowers" (p.480P).

Yet there is more to this budding relationship. A mutual interest in literature and the theatre arts enriches their conversation for the better part of the evening (p.481-482P). The conversation eventually develops into a discussion on the significance of the artist in society, and the obligation of the artist to the world (p.485P). The fervor of the relationship between Carrie and Ames is fuelled as much by this mutual interest in and inclination toward the arts as by any physical desire, and throughout, in fact, seems to enhance the growing desire between them, to the point where words are no longer necessary: "Suddenly [Ames] seemed to have reached the state of Carrie's mind without

talking" (p.483P). We see that "[t]heir eyes had met, and for the first time Ames felt the shock of sympathy, keen and strong" (p.483P). As they take leave of each other, Ames followed Carrie to the door, "wide awake to her beauty", and Carrie felt "very much alone" (p.487P). She felt

> as if she were struggling hopelessly and unaided, as if such a man as he would never care to draw nearer. All her nature was stirred to unrest now. She was already the old, mournful Carrie -- the desireful Carrie, -- unsatisfied. (p.487P)

The Doubleday edition, without benefit of these passages, has only the following contradictory passage to offer:

> About this time Ames returned to New York. He had made a little success in the West, and now opened a laboratory in Wooster Street. Of course, he encountered Carrie through Mrs. Vance; but there was nothing responsive between them. He thought she was still united to Hurstwood, until otherwise informed. (p.353D)

Even in the Doubleday version of the passage, editor Donald Pizer footnoted this paragraph, indicating that Dreiser had been interviewed regarding the ending of the novel and expressed interest in the character of Ames and his need for further development (p.353D). Other conflicting lines appear, such as on page 354, where Ames is said to have looked at Carrie "in such a peculiar way that she realized she had failed" (p.354D). But the most telling change comes in the last paragraph of the Doubleday edition. Dreiser's passage on the blind strivings of the human heart, originally at the end of the penultimate chapter, has now been moved and appears as the last chapter of the novel. We are

told that Carrie will "long alone"; that she will "dream such happiness" as she "may never feel" (p.487D). It appears that Carrie will be unable to build a lasting friendship with Ames, and that she will never feel any lasting happiness.

Only in the Pennsylvania edition do we glimpse a vision of Carrie Meeber's future that corresponds to the onward movement of her character through the novel. We are given a vision of Carrie "ever whole" by virtue of her unending hope (p.487P). Dreiser, in his omniscient wisdom, shows that any vision of perfection sought outside of one's self "shall be melted and dissolved" (p.487P). Carrie's calling is to go "on and further on," leading and alluring her in her pursuit of this perfection (p.487P).

The important point in the whole revision process is that whenever Dreiser decided to rewrite the last two chapters, "either Henry or Jug or perhaps both of them were closely involved in the decision to revise" (p.519P). There are thirteen pages of notes in Jug's handwriting, but the style in which they are written suggests that the notes may have been dictated to her by either Dreiser or Henry (p.519P).

After these notes were written out and Dreiser rewrote the scene between Carrie and Ames, he continued his revisions, changing the coda on the "blind strivings of the human heart" (p.487P). But Jug again made revisions: instead of recopying Dreiser's words, "She made numerous changes in the text, some of them quite significant" (p.518P).

In the end, the new chapters were given back to the agency that had inaccurately typed the original manuscript, where the textual interference continued. This agency, run by Anna Mallon, a friend of Henry's, made further mistakes in punctuation, and through "eyeskip", "points at which the typist became distracted for a moment, took her eyes from the manuscript leaf, and resumed typing at the wrong spot further down the page" (p.510P).

To compound the growing problem, Dreiser's proofreading of the typescript did little to support his original writing. Rather than checking "back to the manuscript," he eliminated the questionable words or underlined fresh revisions; these were "invariably inferior" to the initial work (p.511P). The new passages were also typed by the Mallon agency after which Dreiser "spliced [them] into his transcript" (p.518P). Unfortunately, it is unknown whether Dreiser was aware of all revisions; in any case, "it was Jug's ending, not Dreiser's, which was eventually typed, typeset, and printed in 1900. In fact, Jug's ending has appeared in every edition of SISTER CARRIE ever published" (p.518P).

As a result, then, of the indiscriminate editing of Dreiser's original manuscript, it is clear that the character of Carrie Meeber in the Doubleday edition is much less developed than is the Carrie of the original manuscript. The Doubleday version of Carrie, a barren facsimile of the original Carrie Meeber, lacks depth and emotional fullness. She is like an undernourished twin to the Carrie of the manuscript, a twin that has unfortunately been

plucked from the descriptive environment in which she was meant to blossom. When Carrie is placed back in the natural environment of Dreiser's original work, as given in the Pennsylvania edition of the novel, her actions appear as they were intended by Dreiser. Carrie Meeber is shown to be capable, intelligent, sensitive, perceptive, and to exhibit, through her desires, choices, and ultimate actions the moral balance and creative direction of the emerging artist.

Footnotes to Chapter I

[1] Theodore Dreiser, SISTER CARRIE, The Pennsylvania Edition, General Editor Neda M. Westlake, Historical Editors John C. Berkey and Alice M. Winters, Textual Editor James L. W. West III (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

All subsequent notes from this edition will be annotated within the text by means of the page numbers and the letter 'P' (eg. 224P) to differentiate from references to the Doubleday edition, which is annotated by means of a page number and the letter 'D'. See note 3, Chapter I, below.

[2] _____, Preface, SISTER CARRIE, by Theodore Dreiser. The Pennsylvania edition. Eds. Westlake et al (Philladelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

[3] Theodore Dreiser, SISTER CARRIE, The Norton Critical Edition, Ed. Donald Pizer (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1970) 42.

All subsequent notes from this edition will be annotated within the text by means of the page numbers and the letter 'D' (i.e. 322D) in reference to the fact that Pizer's edition is based on the 1900 Doubleday, Page and Company first edition. (See preface, p.ix, lines 20-21). This means of annotating

between editions facilitates comparison between the two texts. Refer to note 1, Chapter 1, above.

[4] W. B. Yeats, "Dialogue of Self and Soul," W. B. Yeats Selected Poetry, Ed. A. Norman Jeffares, 4th. ed. (London: Cavaye Place, 1976) 2:12.

[5] Maxwell Geismar, "Dreiser and the Dark Texture of Life," The American Scholar 22 (1953): 216.

Chapter II

SISTER CARRIE: Reception and Subsequent Criticism

The controversy that surrounded the publication of SISTER CARRIE, quite famous at the time, continues to be reflected in much subsequent criticism of the novel. Initial response from readers at Harper's, from publisher Frank Doubleday, and possibly even from Doubleday's wife, had for its focus both the "illicit relations" (p.519P) of Carrie Meeber, as her situation was then referred to, and Dreiser's colloquialisms, rough language, and profanity (p.525P). The realism within which Dreiser wrote was seen only as a harsh background to Carrie's unpalatable situation. Dreiser persuaded his friend Henry Mills Alden, editor of Harper's Monthly, to submit the novel to Harper and Brothers, but it was rejected.

As was his habit, Dreiser enlisted the aid of Henry to shorten and expurgate his novel in an attempt to secure a publisher (See Chapter I). The most significant cuts suggested by Henry had to do with sex (p.521P). Dreiser accepted these changes, but the Pennsylvania Edition is careful to explain that, in view of the report from the Harper reader, Dreiser "almost never disagreed" with Henry's cuts (p.522P).

When Dreiser presented the novel to Doubleday and McClure, Frank Norris, author of MCTEAGUE and reader for Doubleday, Page and

Company, thought SISTER CARRIE "an excellent piece of fiction" (p.522P). Dreiser thought his novel was accepted and left town. Unfortunately, Frank Doubleday did not like the novel; it was possible that his wife read the manuscript and also disapproved of it. Whatever the case, he asked to be released as publisher. At Henry's insistence, Dreiser held Doubleday to his obligation; the contract was signed. To the original title, "The Flesh and the Spirit", Dreiser himself added the words, "or Sister Carrie" (p.525P). The novel was published, after even more pruning, but Frank Doubleday had learned that he was not obliged to advertise or otherwise promote the book (p.525P). The relationship between Dreiser and Doubleday by this time was poor, and cooperation in proofing and revisions was limited.

Someone made other changes "probably without consulting Dreiser" (p.527P). The most significant, sexually - oriented censoring concerns Carrie's spending the night together with Hurstwood in a Montreal hotel room before the marriage ceremony the next day: "in the published book the two are married in the afternoon of the day they reach Montreal and then sleep together that night in the hotel room" (p.528P).

In the Doubleday edition, Hurstwood, who has changed his name by then to Wheeler, says to Carrie, "'I'll get the license this afternoon.'" (p.212D). Dreiser follows this with, "They were married by a Baptist minister, the first divine they found convenient" (p.212D). But in the manuscript, as in the

Pennsylvania edition, the ceremony does not take place until the next day: "'I'll get the license first thing in the morning.' The next day they were married by a Baptist minister, the first divine they found convienent" (p.301P).

Even with cuts, Carrie Meeber's sexuality elicited much criticism, as did Dreiser's unacceptable language. Editing removed some of this language. The original phrase, "'Why the hell don't you .'" (p.424P), was cleansed, in the Doubleday edition, to read, "'Why don't you ...'" (p.309D). Also removed from the novel before the Doubleday edition went to print was the phrase, "'you bastards'" (p.309D), now shown in the Pennsylvania edition: "'You're the suckers that keep the poor people down -- you bastards'" (p.424P)! After the editing, phrases such as "'God damned dog'", and "'Damned old cur'" (p.363D) remained , along with less profane expressions such as "'Bloody coward'" (p.422P), and "'bloody murtherin thafe'" (p.424P), "'rounders'" (p.32D), and "'masher'" (p.3D). Although review copies sent out to "influential literary persons"(p.528P) by Frank Norris garnered "generally favourable" notices (p.528P), the commercial success of the novel was quashed by the publishers, who did nothing to promote the book. From this publishing fiasco it is apparent that the focus of the displeasure, in accord with the unwavering criticism and censorship, was twofold: Dreiser's blunt verbal style, and his presentation of a sexually active Carrie Meeber. No amount of pruning overcame the commercial resistance to the novel; only 456

American copies were sold in two years (p.529P).

The reception of SISTER CARRIE in England was a much different story. The London publishing firm of William Heinemann discovered the novel, and "Heinemann himself offered to bring out a British Edition" (p.529P) for his "Dollar Library of American Fiction", which introduced British readers to contemporary American writing (p.529P). The novel was too long for such an edition; "Heineman [the publisher] therefore stipulated that SISTER CARRIE be shortened, and even specified how the cutting be done: the first 200 pages must be condensed into approximately 80 pages (p.529P). Dreiser complied. He persuaded Arthur Henry to make the necessary cuts, this time using a copy of the Doubleday, Page first printing (p.530P).

The British edition shortened the already-cut Doubleday edition even further. Still, the novel was well received; the British sliced through the question of propriety and singled out "as the truly American qualities of the work the very materialism and ungentility that had offended native reviewers."[1] But the question of editing remained, for the new cuts were made in the portion that most concerned Carrie. Page 200 continues where Carrie is on the train with Hurstwood, having just discovered Hurstwood's ruse concerning Drouet's illness (p.200D). Therefore, in view of the cuts previously discussed (Chapter 1), we can see that Carrie's character would naturally become even further diminished than it already had from Henry's initial cuts. It

follows that the second effect of this additional editing would magnify the events surrounding Hurstwood's death. In fact, rather than the story of Carrie Meeber, "[in] the Heinemann edition, more so than in the American edition, it is the tragedy of George Hurstwood that dominates the novel."[2]

In the years following these publications, further criticism evolved, much of it focused on the character of Carrie Meeber, and using the faulty text as source. Therefore it is understandable that Carrie Meeber has usually been seen as a blind, instinctive opportunist. The effect of all the editing was to make her appear

> almost mindless, with little personality, practically no moral conscience, and no awareness of her course in life. She is almost ignorant of sex and is unaware of her ability to awaken desire in men. She seems especially to lack the emotional depth necessary for success as an actress. (p.532-3P)

Thus the critical impression that has predominated presents Carrie Meeber as "shallow, fickle, and unthinking" (p.533P).

In fact, much criticism of Carrie Meeber adopts a strongly moral tone. This character Dreiser created apparently so affected -- and in some cases incensed -- certain readers and critics that the novel has even been approached as a documentary of a distasteful affair. Thus some critics thought it should be smothered for the general good.

It appears that Dreiser's realism offended the sensibilities of certain critics and readers. What offended them in particular was Carrie's open pursuit of money and the good life - - which are assumed appropriate for the male but somehow inappropriate for the

female. Such critics are inclined to point out that Carrie's original lack of money proves she is a sexual opportunist. W. M. Frohock, in THEODORE DREISER, tells us,

> Money and commodities are what count, and the men [Carrie] meets teach her that physical attractiveness is a commodity, fully negotiable. There is no moral conflict, and she isn't bright enough to be cynical, she just exploits the one commodity she has.[3]

Richard Lehan, in THEODORE DREISER: HIS WORLD AND HIS NOVELS, is much more explicit: "Drouet pays [Carrie] to live with him and their relationship is completely financial. When Carrie sees that Hurstwood can offer her more, she quickly tires of Drouet."[4] Lehan paints a most uncomplimentary portrait of Carrie: "Hurstwood loses the right to sleep with her" because, as Lehan sees it, sex is "something Carrie believes she should be paid for, and unlike the grocer, she is dubious of Hurstwood's credit (p.322).

Critic Phillip Gerber's stance on Carrie Meeber is softened in that he recognized Dreiser as "the intuitive artist" who searched for "a solution in the metaphysical".[5] Yet in his book, THEODORE DREISER, he does not seem to be able to adequately represent the full character of Carrie Meeber. Remnants of social and moral limitations can still be found in several comments he makes. "In all of SISTER CARRIE, there is not one character whose status is not determined economically" (p.53). He tells us, further: "implications hint that Carrie has received none but the most rudimentary home training in social behaviour and in so far as moral values are conceived, that training has no salutary effect

upon her relations in the world" (p.54)

One of the more interesting critiques of the novel appeared in 1951 just before the Dreiser revival of the '60's. Claude M. Simpson's "Sister Carrie Reconsidered" begins with summary comments on the earlier critiques: "[t]he trouble with SISTER CARRIE was that it ignored or defied conventional views of morality."[6] He continues: "the subject matter was considered 'unpleasant', the characters 'somewhat uncultivated', the author a 'chronicler of materialism in its basest form'" (p.47). Thus Simpson indicates the problems earlier reviewers found in the book. But what is particularly interesting is the fact that Simpson's study includes an analysis of "moral ambiguities" in SISTER CARRIE, referring to Carrie's conscience debate as presented on page 70 in the Doubleday, pages 89-90 of the Pennsylvania edition. Publishing before the Pennsylvania edition, Simpson falls victim to the faulty editing previously discussed in this study, wherein Carrie debates with her 'inner voice'. Obviously having only the Doubleday edition, -- or some offspring thereof -- to refer to as definitive, Simpson tells us that Carrie

> simply stops worrying, and Dreiser resolves her debate with a single sentence: 'The voice of want made answer for her.' Here is a refusal to see the problem in moral terms, yet the earlier dream symbol [Minnie's dream of the well] hints at an unconscious assumption that wrong is an ethical reality, for all Dreiser's surface bravado. (p.51)

This is a particularly good example of critical response to edited materials. Earlier in the novel Simpson had perceptively

observed Dreiser's moral stance, but he sees that it is not sustained through the characters. Thus he labels the missing link, as have other critics, a moral ambiguity in the novel, when what it really is is the result of the deletion of the entire conscience dialogue that followed (p.90P). We can see that no matter how attentive and astute the critic, he cannot work with what is not there.

William J. Handy, writing in the same year as Simpson, with equal perception but with the same handicap of edited materials, tells us:

> For Carrie, Drouet, and Hurstwood, the dominant consideration in life is materialistic success and its accompanying rewards. . . . . The ideal life for Carrie, Drouet and Hurstwood was completely the same: the world of better living.[7] [Elipsis mine]

Barbara Ann Hochman, writing just before the publication of the Pennsylvania edition, remarked upon Carrie: "In the long run she is singularly without any operative (not to say binding) conception of social or moral norm through which to assess her own actions."[8] But Hochman apparently discovered the Pennsylvania edition, amending her essay in time to reflect her new information. In an informative footnote which refers to the Pennsylvania edition, Hochman remarks upon what she now sees as "[t]he added depth and complexity of the 'new' Carrie" (p.146). She goes on, in this note, to remark that

> Dreiser's effort to break down stereotypes is furthered by his portrait of Ames, who, through his contact with Carrie, comes to revise his own

> preconceptions about 'the moral status of certain types of actresses'. (p.137)

Hochman's comment about the " 'new' Carrie " supports this reader's view that the Pennsylvania Carrie is, indeed, a significantly different character than the Doubleday one.

Unfortunately, a selected study of established Dreiser critics shows how tenaciously the old Doubleday Carrie still clings to life.

F. O. Matthiessen helped establish Dreiser as a novelist of compassion and genius, yet the limitations of his Doubleday-based criticism are immediately apparent. Still, Matthiessen's strength lies in his acknowledgement of the social and moral conventions Dreiser had to contend with in his presentation of Carrie Meeber, and in Matthiessen's essential recognition that "Dreiser is mainly concerned with her growth into possession of a gift."[9] It is to Matthiessen's credit that, without the advantage of the manuscript study, he still saw the ultimate direction of the novel. But Matthiessen has "a hard time believing in [Carrie's] emotional greatness as she works her way up from chorus girl to star." (p.485) Matthiessen cannot see Carrie as any type of heroine, or as any form of artist, even in so far as she may represent Dreiser: "Carrie is a much less likely vehicle for the realization at which Dreiser himself was just arriving, a realization of some of the attributes of the artistic temperament" (p.485). We can only speculate on what Matthiessen's critical position might have been, had he been able to refer to the Pennsylvania edition. In any

case, he then refers to Carrie as "not unconventional enough" (p.486), in a distinction which is unclear and which seems to relate to his perception of the artistic personality. After this he assesses Carrie's position in the novel with the somewhat limpid cliche: "She is never a woman in love" (p.486). Having thus concluded,to his apparent satisfaction, the issue of Carrie Meeber, he tells the reader "[t]he central vitality of the novel, however Dreiser may have conceived it, lies in Hurstwood" (p.486).

Donald Pizer, eminent Dreiser critic, adds to the critical study of SISTER CARRIE his awareness of Dreiser's deep sense of the extraordinary in unsophisticated people. Pizer sees in the novel, as in all of Dreiser's writing, an ethical conception of life, a value-defining Naturalism. Pizer is able to affirm: "Dreiser's ability to capture the tangible commonplace of everyday existence powerfully suggests that the commonplace and everyday are the essence of experience."[10] Yet he notes that certain individuals strive to "break out of" (p.571) the commonplace world, individuals such as Carrie Meeber who possess, according to Pizer, a "finer, more intense, more emotional nature" than most" (p.571). He has recognized the role Drouet and Hurstwood play in Carrie's aspirations and even introduces the possibility that Ames "represents the next higher step in this quest" (p.573).

Pizer perceptively acknowledges that Carrie "possesses this inner force, a force which is essentially bold and free" (p.573). Still, he is not beyond attaching to Carrie the desire "to be

loved", an emphasis not supported by the text, and sustaining the theme that chance rather than choice is the significant determinant in Carrie's life.

In the end, Pizer exudes the familiar critical bias, however unintended, through an inappropriate choice of words, and thus reflects a further interpretation of Carrie Meeber as a mindless, instinctive cipher blindly groping her way through a mechanistic world over which she has as little control as she has over herself. Even though Pizer allows that Carrie rises through her relationships, he cannot bring her to a position of implicit choice. He ends by telling the reader that her "illicit relationships" are "moral rather than immoral" only because Dreiser unconsciously changed his moral norm from one which explicitly condemns specific acts of immorality to one which implicitly renders these acts as moral if they contribute to a larger good (p.586).

As for other critics, Charles Walcutt, in "The Wonder and Terror of Life", tells us that "The movement of the novel does not depend upon acts of will by the central figures".[12] For Kenneth Lynn, in "SISTER CARRIE: An Introduction", we see that "The greatness of SISTER CARRIE lies primarily in its portrayal of the blinding impact of the modern city on the human personality."[13] The noted Ellen Moers recounts the scene "in the downtown restaurant where Carrie is 'seduced' by Drouet"[14]; she describes Carrie as a

> stupid, commonplace girl whose only charm is her youthful prettiness (and a certain something that must here be established finally for the reader) (p.561)

and uses the word "seduced" (p.561) as though Carrie were deprived of her faculty of choice. Moers's critical approach to the character of Carrie Meeber is heavy with moral overtones and genteel discrimination. Carrie is, in her words, "sufficiently null"; she is someone who is taking a step she knows to be "morally wrong" (p.561). Richard Poirier sums up the most stagnant aspect of this critical stream by stating that:

> what moves Carrie in each episode, and what therefore moves the plot is sexual impulse. More accurately, Carrie discovers that her sexual interests are excited by the economic and social power in the men she meets.[15]

Thus the predominant critical stance regarding Carrie Meeber falls within the narrowed spectrum of chance, instinct, and dull intellect.

Few critics have recognized the "pervasive illusion of freedom"[16] Dreiser spun about his characters through imagery and symbolism, much less acknowledged the expansive content of his authorial comments. Therefore it seems appropriate to undertake a fresh approach to the character of Carrie Meeber; Barbara Hochman suggests: "From the most obviously trapped to the apparently free

> [his] protagonists start from the implicit assumption

that anything is possible" (p. 3) [Elipsis mine]. The Pennsylvania edition, analogously, gives new possibility for interpretation. It therefore seems appropriate to undertake at this time a fresh

approach to the character of Carrie Meeber.

Footnotes to Chapter II

[1] Claude M. Simpson, Jr., "Sister Carrie Reconsidered," Southwest Review 1, No. I, (Winter,1959): 48.

[2] Theodore Dreiser, SISTER CARRIE, Ed. Jack Salzman (New York: David Lewis, 1972); reprinted in Pennsylvania edition, 530.

[3] W. M. Frohock, THEODORE DREISER (Minneapolis: Minneapolis U. P., 1972) 13.

[4] Richard Lehan, THEODORE DREISER: HIS WORLD AND HIS NOVELS (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969) 60.

[5] Phillip Gerber, THEODORE DREISER (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964) 53.

[6] Claude M. Simpson, Jr., "Sister Carrie Reconsidered" Southwest Review 1, No. I (Winter, 1959):44.

[7] Wm. J. Handy, "A Re-examination of SISTER CARRIE" Texas Studies in Literature and Language 1 (Spring, 1958): 389.

[8] Barbara Anne Hochman, Self-Image and Moral Judgement in SISTER CARRIE, diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1982, (Jerusalem: Jerusalem U. P., 1982) 127.

[9] F. O. Matthiessen, "A Picture of Conditions," Theodore Dreiser (New York:Sloan, 1951). Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition, SISTER CARRIE, Ed. D. Pizer (New York: New York, 1970) 485.

[10] Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth Century American Literature (Carbondale, Illinois, 1966). Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition, SISTER CARRIE Ed. D. Pizer (New York: W. W. Norton and Co.) 570.

[11] Donald Pizer, "The Problem of Philosophy in the Novel," Bucknell Review XVIII (March, 1970). Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition, SISTER CARRIE Ed. D. Pizer (New York: W. W. Norton and Co.) 585.

Footnotes to Chapter II

[12] Charles Walcutt, "The Wonder and Terror of Life," American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream (Minneapolis, Minn. University of Minneapolis Press, 1956) pp. vii-viii, 180-193. Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition, SISTER CARRIE, Ed. D. Pizer (New York: W. W. Norton and Co.) 570.

[13] Kenneth S. Lynn, "Sister Carrie: An Introduction," SISTER CARRIE (New York, 1957) pp. v-xvi. Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition, SISTER CARRIE, Ed. D. Pizer (New York: New York) 514.

[14] Ellen Moers, "The Finesse of Dreiser" American Scholar XXXIII (Winter, 1963-64) 109-144. Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition, SISTER CARRIE, Ed. D. Pizer (New York: New York) 561.

[15] Richard Poirier, A world Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature (New York, 1966) 235-50. Reprinted in the Norton Critical Edition, SISTER CARRIE, Ed. D. Pizer (New York: New York) 580.

[16] Barbara Anne Hochman, The Moral Realism of Theodore Dreiser, diss., The State University of New Jersey, 1982, (New Jersey: New Brunswick, 1982) 3.

Chapter III

Chicago: Crucible of Dreams

Carrie Meeber reveals her nature through the myriad details of her awakening in Chicago. She speaks through her desires in an articulation of physical form and beauty that begins with her desire to "reconnoitre the mysterious city" (p.4P). The diorama of Dreiser's Chicago, its movement, colour, and endless variety of choice, serves as a medium for her longing and as a vehicle for whatever satisfaction she will achieve. In displaying its many wares, Chicago helps Dreiser to illuminate Carrie's character as she grows into consciousness. Through her involvement with ornament and clothing, her choices of employment, her interests and ambitions, we see her exercising the artistic consciousness that will later make her a success on the stage.

Carrie's unfolding begins as an act of the will: she chooses to leave her father's house and establish a life of her own. Her story thus begins at her beginning, and she could be described as newborn.

Once Carrie leaves home, she is independent for the first time although she is still poor. Dreiser tells us of her "cheap imitation alligator skin satchel", her "small lunch in a paper box", and reveals that she had only "four dollars in money" (p.3P). Yet she is undaunted. However sad she may be upon leaving,

> it [is] certainly not for advantages now being given up. A gush of tears at her mother's farewell kiss, a touch in the throat when the cars clacked by the flour mill where her father worked by the day, a pathetic sigh as the familiar green environs of the village passed in review, and the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken. (p.3P)

There is more to Carrie's sadness than the usual emotion that accompanies parting. Her "pathetic sigh" (p.3P) hints at some experience of suffering. The "green environs" of her village, passing in review, seem to encompass the conflicting circumstances of her life to that point; "green" is a colour of youth, transition, and change, it is also a colour of intrinsic polarity and antithesis.[1] Carrie's sigh seems to indicate that she has some awareness of these fundamental conditions. Through it she seems to let go of her earlier, youthful illusion, and to acquiesce to the reality that appears to follow.

Her sigh thus becomes a key to her innate character. Carrie has some intrinsic grasp of reality, limitation and suffering. The fact that she leaves Columbia City shows that she knows life has something more to offer than what she has experienced; this growing consciousness allows her to leave behind her "girlhood" (p.1P). She demonstrates an ability to detach herself from her past and move on.

In this way, Carrie begins to circumvent the Naturalists' course of events. By means of her desire and will for something better, she sets out to create her own path. She does not stumble

into an unprecipatated position, nor is she thrown into change as a victim of some outside force. She moves according to her own will in hopeful anticipation of a better life. Whatever it was that Columbia City, and her girlhood, offered -- family, finances -- was obviously not enough to sustain her. She is a dreamer of big dreams, and Chicago represents the fulfilment of those dreams. Carrie is prepared to ride the train to a more expansive life.

The conflict between Carrie's sensibilities and her desire for a better life is focused when Carrie steps on the train to Chicago. The question of how her life is to unfold is examined by Dreiser in the first of his authorial commentaries. He tells us that a girl leaving home at eighteen "either falls into saving hands and becomes better or assumes the cosmopolitan standard of virtue and becomes worse" (p.3-4P). Carrie left behind in Columbia City, along with the good but perhaps stultifying influences of parents and friends, the moral and social direction of her parents and the conventions of her small community that had guided her. If she now assumes Chicago's "cosmopolitan standard of virtue", she may become "worse". It seems she requires "saving hands" if she is to become "better"; thus it is a question of into whose "hands" Carrie Meeber is to fall.

The polarities hinted at when Carrie left home are now reinforced. In the fast-approaching city she will be surrounded by opposing forces. Dreiser's imagery and comments call up the potential antitheses of the moral and material perspectives she is

to confront, and from which she must choose. She appears to be facing some test of her character.

The first significant clue to the nature of Carrie's character is reflected in her perception of the "City" itself, for

> [s]ince infancy her ears had been full of its fame. Once the family had thought of moving there. If she secured good employment they might come now. Anyhow it was vast. There were lights and sounds and a roar of things. People were rich. There were vast depots. This onrushing train was merely speeding to get there. (p.3P)

From the beginning, life in Chicago appeals to Carrie with a sense of mystery and wonder because she wants to know and experience more than she has. But the enticement of the big city runs much deeper than the obvious superficial and material appeal.

> The city has its cunning wiles no less than the infinitely smaller and more human tempter. There are large forces which allure, with all the soulfulness of expression possible in the most cultured human. The gleam of a thousand lights is often as effective, to all moral intents and purposes, as the persuasive light in a wooing and fascinating eye. Half the undoing of the unsophisticated and natural mind is accomplished by forces wholly superhuman. (p.4P)

Carrie's encounter with the City thus begins on a warning note: "Without a counsellor at hand to whisper cautious interpretation, what falsehoods may not these things breathe into the unguarded ear" (p.4P)! Carrie appears to be in danger from the lights, sounds, and forces the City contains. Dreiser has issued an omniscient alarm: "Unrecognized for what [the forces] are, their beauty, like music, too often relaxes, then weakens, then perverts the simplest human perceptions" (p.4P). It seems that the

forces at work in this city of "cunning wiles" (p.3P) are beautiful but are at the same time capable of falsehood. We know they can allure "with all the soulfulness of expression possible in the most cultured human" (p.4P). The questions raised are left unanswered. How can that which is beautiful be filled with "cunning wiles"? How can that which is likened to "music" pervert?

The setting is the cosmological imagery of temptation, of Eve and the whispering serpent, or Leda and her cunning swan. Carrie Meeber is tempted because she wants more than she now has. It almost seems that she actually requires more if she is to survive in the big city, especially since Dreiser says she is still of "rudimentary mind" and has "the insipid prettiness of the formative period" (p.4P). Reading is "beyond her interest"; knowledge is still "a sealed book" (p.4P). She cannot "toss her head gracefully", has ineffectual hands, and flat feet. She does not seem to have much to work with, "half-equipped" (p.4P) as she is, yet she is moving to the big city, and seems entirely unconscious of the pitfalls that await her. Carrie goes to Chicago purely on the strength of her ever-present desire.

> A half-equipped little knight she was, venturing to reconnoitre the mysterious city, and dreaming wild dreams of some vague, far-off supremacy which should make it prey and subject, the proper penitent, grovelling at a woman's slipper. (p.4P)

Carrie Meeber in Chicago seems to be a conflict in terms: a girl of wild dreams and imagination with only will and desire to serve her. What is ironic is that this same half-equipped young

woman aspires to some form of supremacy over the mysterious city as "subject" (p.4P). Through this imagery, Dreiser suggests that she recognizes a need for some fundamental transformation, or change. The image of Carrie as a "knight" (p.4P) indicates a quest to restore honour, to replace some lost thing of value, or to right some injustice. She reverses the usual male image. Still, like a timid but persistent Joan d'Arc, Carrie aspires to have the city at her feet. She also seems to be seeking some material reward since she dreams of the city as her "prey" (p.4P). And Carrie wants even more: she dreams of the city as subject to her, and as a "proper penitent" (p.4P).

This final transformation calls up a counter-image of greater sovereignty, of Carrie herself as some form of Queen. Whatever her course is to be, Carrie senses that there is a wrong to be righted for which her subject city must make penance or amends. What she does not yet see is the form her quest is to take or the injustice she is to undergo. Now Drouet speaks for the first time: "'That,'" said a voice in her ear, 'is one of the prettiest little resorts in Wisconsin'" (p.4P). His first appeal is to Carrie's sense of beauty.

With this "voice in her ear", the temptation setting is established. It soon appears that a more familiar -- and salacious -- wrong is impending through the introduction of Charles Drouet:

> Here was a type of the travelling canvasser for a manufacturing house . . . dubbed by the slang

> of the day 'drummers'. He came within the meaning of a still newer term . . .which concisely expressed the thought of one whose dress or manners are such as to impress strongly the fancy, or elicit the admiration, of susceptible young women -- a 'masher.' His clothes were of an impressive character, the suit being cut of a striped and crossed pattern of brown wool, . . . a stiff shirt bosom of white and pink stripes, . . . a tie of distinct pattern. From his coat sleeves protruded a pair of linen cuffs . . . fastened with large gold-plate buttons set with the common yellow agates known as 'cats-eyes'. His fingers bore several rings, one the ever-enduring heavy seal, and from his vest dangled a neat gold watch chain from which was suspended the secret insignia of the Order of Elks. The whole suit was rather tight-fitting and was finished off with broad-soled tan shoes, highly polished, and the grey felt hat, then denominated 'fedora'. (p.5-6P) [Elipses mine]

The arrival of Drouet, a "masher" (p.5P) dressed in conspicuous style, is an event for Carrie. Not only does Drouet present her with an opportunity to become familiar with and enjoy the material and physical worlds, but his appearance further symbolizes an initiation into further conscious awareness, as mythologized in the Biblical Garden of Eden passage, or reflected in, for example, Yeats', "Leda and the Swan".

Drouet's appearance in this context recalls the symbolic serpent, or the magnificent swan. He is, "for the order of intellect represented, attractive" (p.5P); his pleasing effect "was not lost upon Carrie" (p.5P). Further, his intentions are made plain by the text; he is "actuated not by greed but by an insatiable love of variable pleasure -- woman -- pleasure" (p.6P). As such, it is a familiar story. Whatever the depth of Drouet's interest, Carrie responds to his call. When he looked at her,

> with natural intuition she felt a certain interest growing [in Drouet]. Her maidenly reserve and a certain sense of what was conventional under the circumstances called her to forestall and deny this familiarity, but the daring and magnetism of the individual, born of past experiences, prevailed. She answered. (p.4-5P)

Carrie, however, sees further than the simple Drouet. She is on a quest for beauty, in contrast to Drouet's more limited sexual pursuit. Beauty appeals to her from the start; thus Drouet's spirited style and attractive looks combine to exude the daring and magnetism to which Carrie initially succumbs. In this way, Drouet inspires an almost esoteric response from Carrie that enhances his mere physical presence and goes beyond her own "sense of convention" (p.5P). Form is the most accessible means to her consciousness in the beginning; thus we can see that what inspires and sustains Carrie's interest in Drouet is the obvious: "[t]he flush, colorful cheeks, a light mustache, a grey fedora hat" (p. 5P). For Drouet is a well-dressed, spirited man, and "whatever he had to recommend him, you may be sure was not lost upon Carrie, in this her first glance" (p.6P).

Dreiser himself does not stop at mere physical form, but examines it for content: "Those who have never delved into the depths of a woman's conscience must, at some time or other, have come upon that mystery of mysteries -- the moral significance, to her, of clothes" (p.7P). Carrie does not yet have the money or opportunity to dress well, but she is, according to Dreiser, intuitively aware of the significance of clothing. She sees that

Drouet is better dressed than she; thus, to her he appears more acceptable to the world. "She became conscious of an inequality. Her own plain blue dress with its black cotton tape trimmings realized itself to her imagination as shabby. She felt the worn state of her shoes" (p.7P). Carrie instinctively recognizes the line that, on a social level, divides those "who are worth glancing at and those who are not" (p.7P). To her, Drouet's clothing is, in a primitive, almost totemic way, symbolic of the state she herself aspires to but has not yet attained. Thus the "moral significance" (p.7P) to Carrie at this stage in her development is that her own social position is substantially diminished.

Carrie is concerned over her new position, as she perceives it to be. But Drouet "mistook her thought wave" (p.7P) as a frivolous interest in new clothing; thus he launches immediately into a conversation about "Morgenroth, the clothier and Gibson the drygoods man" (p. 7P).

Carrie responds again, "aroused by memories of longings the displays in the latter's establishment had cost her" (p.7P). The "longings" evoked by Drouet seem to remind her of a more beautiful way, and -- perhaps -- of a better life for herself.

For Drouet's immediate purposes, however, he has now discovered "a clue to her interest" (p.7P); he "followed it up deftly" (p.7P). He tells Carrie of "clothing, his travels, Chicago and the amusements of that city" (p.7P), and he tells her that if she is going there she will "enjoy it immensely" (p.7P). Thus for

Carrie, the call to beauty continues:

> There was a little ache in her fancy of all he described. Her insignificance in the presence of so much magnificence faintly affected her. She realized that hers was not to be a round of pleasure, and yet there was something promising in all the material prospects [Drouet] set forth. There was something satisfactory in the attention of this individual with his good clothes. She could not help smiling as he told her of some popular actress she reminded him of. She was not silly and yet attention of this sort had its weight. (p.7,8P)

Within the context of this quotation Dreiser has moved further into the center of Carrie Meeber. He told us earlier that Carrie was "conscious of an inequality" (p.7P); he now tells us that she is conscious of "her insignificance" in the face of what Drouet represents. The first meaningful clue to Carrie's ultimate direction is that she "could not help smiling as [Drouet] told her of some popular actress she reminded him of" (p.8P). It seems that a connection has been made between the "magnificence" Drouet described and the actress he compared her to. Perhaps it is a superficial identification at this time, yet it is clearly made.

Through these passages Dreiser indicates that Carrie understands the reality of her situation. In so far as she can now see, the material world that Drouet represents is necessary, practical, and desirable compared to her own shabby state. She further experiences through her quick, perceptive nature a "flash vision of [her] not securing employment" (p.8P). Even the simple act of exchanging addresses affects Carrie, calling up her desire for beauty and abundance. Drouet takes out his purse: "Such a

purse had never been carried by any man who had ever been attentive to [Carrie] before" (p.8P). Dreiser tells us it "impressed her deeply" (p.8P). But the charming Drouet presses on, misreading Carrie's directness, for "she had not yet learned the many little affectations with which women conceal their true feelings -- some things which she did appeared bold" (p.8P).

Dreiser sums up the essential appeal Drouet holds for Carrie:

> The purse, the shiny tan shoes, the smart new suit and the *air* with which he did things built up for her a dim world of fortune around him of which he was the centre. It disposed her pleasantly toward all he might do. (p.8,9P) [Italics mine]

Carrie's response is not confined to the clothing Drouet wears as an indication of his buying power, nor to any mere superficialities of clothing, gastronomy, and sex that he represents. There is an overall "air" about Drouet, a captivating ebullience in the way he does things that uplifts and restores her and intimates a "dim world of fortune around him". His clothing, looks, and personality together serve to attract Carrie Meeber's attention, interest, and ultimately, longing. The cumulative result, for Carrie, is that Drouet "contributed the warmth of his spirit to her body until she was a new girl" (p.60P).

Once Carrie settles in Chicago, it is by way of contrast that Dreiser presents the limited prospects she faces if she is to remain with her sister. Each dismal encounter with the poorer, more unpleasant aspects of the city serves to reinforce the

distance between Drouet's world and that which is slated to be Carrie's. It begins with Minnie's appearance at the train station, for "[amid] all the maze, uproar and novelty, [Carrie] felt cold reality taking her by the hand. No world of light and merriment. No round of amusement. Her sister carried with her much of the grimness of shift and toil" (p.11P). The contrast continues at Minnie's apartment, where

> the walls were discordantly papered. The floors were covered with matting and the hall laid with a thin rag carpet. One could see that the furniture was of that poor, hurriedly patched together quality . . . sold by the instalment houses. . . . [Carrie] only knew that these things, to her, were dull and commonplace. (p.13P) [Elipses mine]

Even as Carrie begins to search for work, she finds herself "an outcast without employment, one whom the average employee could tell at a glance was poor and in need of a situation" (p.22P).

Meanwhile, on every block of the great city, she is confronted with the "remarkable displays of trinkets, dress goods, shoes, stationery, jewelry" (p.22P), none of which she can afford, although she "felt the claim of each trinket and valuable upon her personally" (p.22P). "The dainty slippers and stockings, the delicately frilled skirts and petticoats, the laces, ribbons, hair combs, purses, all touched [Carrie] with individual desire" (p.22P). For the world of clothing, Dreiser tells us, has an unique appeal to women "from its spiritual or artistic side" (p.23P). Fine garments appeal to Carrie "on account of their true beauty, their innate fitness in any order of harmony, their place

in the magical order and sequence of dress" (p.23P). We see the meaning, the content, Carrie perceives in fine clothing. She realizes that most people will respond to her clothing, and judge her character and worth by how she looks.

> Not only did Carrie feel the drag of desire for all of this which was new and pleasing in apparel for women, but she noticed, too, . . . the fine ladies who elbowed and ignored her, brushing past in utter disregard of her presence. (p.23P) [Elipsis mine]

In the face of this beauty she cannot afford, "[a] flame of envy lighted in her heart. She realized in a dim way how much the city held -- wealth, fashion, ease -- every adornment for women, and she longed for dress and beauty with a whole and fulsome heart" (p.23P).

Nor is the extent to which Carrie Meeber craves beauty limited to items of dress. The expanse of her vision is "not to be reduced to the common level of observation which prevailed in [Minnie's] flat" (p.31P). Once Carrie secured an offer of employment, she "plunged recklessly into privileges and amusements" (p.29P) in her imagination. "The round of theatre with delightful seats was a simple matter. Her certain income covered it all" (p.20P).

Carrie's longing for beauty and form now extends as well to the men she meets, wherein the gap between the "uncouth and ridiculous" boys and the dapper Drouet is unbridgeable (p.40P). Even their conversation has "something hard and low about it" (p.40P).

In the end, her unpleasant sojourn at Minnie's, the dismal job

search, her lack of money, and the rude individuals she encountered overwhelm her. "She felt as though she should be better served, and her heart revolted" (p.41P). Somehow, Carrie feels herself worth more. Therefore, when she meets Drouet again, she is ready to accept what he will offer. The "dress" that inspires her is the inspiration of form (p.23P); the "air" (p.8P) that energizes her is Drouet's optimistic good will and confident approach to life.

Carrie's orientation reveals her potentially artistic nature because she desires more than mere form; she longs for <u>beautiful</u> form. The beauty of fine clothing, the "lights, the tinkle of car bells, the late murmur of the city" (p.30P) stir her and reveal an aesthetic sense. Through this response to beautiful form, Dreiser hints that Carrie may come to know the "something promising" (p.8P) she anticipates in the material world, whether it is the "something satisfactory" (p.8P) of Drouet's good clothes, or the "something lost to her when he moves away" (p.12P). In the manner of the Greeks, Carrie seems drawn to beautiful form as a means

> to uncover ways to a knowledge of those intelligible forms that are the 'models'(in Platonic terms, or as Aristotle taught, the entelechies) of all things: the immanent 'thoughts' of that First Mover, called God, who is both separate, 'by Himself', and yet identical with the nature of the universe as the order and potential of its parts.[2].

To this extent we can see in her the earliest emanations of an artistic psyche, and the first stirrings of those transcendent values of the creative spirit. In fact, Dreiser eventually tells us directly that the "something better" <u>is</u> "the speculative

contemplation of the ideal" (p.484P). At this time, however, the unfolding of Carrie Meeber as potential artist awaits the transformative intervention of Charles Drouet.

Charles Drouet responds with enthusiasm to beautiful things, and he has found a way of attaining them. The daring of his dress and the style of his approach appeal to the spirit in Carrie, a spirit commensurate with adventure. The magnetism of Drouet's appeal lies in his willingness to explore the limits of existing form. He reveals a means for Carrie Meeber to escape from the "dull and commonplace" (p.11P) subsistence of her sister. For Carrie, at this time, Drouet represents the ultimate freedom: the opportunity for personal self-expression through beautiful form. Thus, her willingness to acquiesce to the experience of the new completes a quaternary of artistic attributes through form, beauty, desire, and will, and prepares for the transformation of her own self.

Dreiser's descriptive imagery supports the movement of the novel on this deeper level. Carrie, the country girl "removed from the stabilizing influences of nature" (p.26), is now called to "spiritual initiation; from the work of enlivening fields to that of livening the soul" (p.26). Charles Drouet is the "butterfly", "light on the wing" (p.496P), who flits between the world of the spirit and the material world. He is, as well, "the moth, the pig, the clown, the actor, the businessman and the sensualist, mingled in combination" (p.64P). [Elipsis mine]. As such, he is

the perfect medium, for he represents the intersection of the imaginative and the practical worlds.

He now metamorphoses and descends, his "cat's eyes" gleaming (p.5P), into the world of Carrie Meeber. He wears on his finger the "one, the ever-enduring heavy seal" (p.5P), and carries the "secret insignia" of an exclusive order" (p.5P). The flashy style in which he is dressed represents, on an archetypal level, the Trickster, or Magician, whose "variegated colours suggest the incorporation of many disparate elements . and suggest both opposition and interaction".[3] [Elipsis mine] Drouet is the 'trickster'; while his appeal is to Carrie's spirit, he calls to the body as well, initiating Carrie into greater consciousness on both levels. The material world he represents serves as the forum for transformation. On a higher level, the heavy seal he wears seems to convey a singular authority from some unknown source. His secret insignia -- from the Order of Elks -- symbolizes, mythologically, an ultimate power, the "whirlwind of the Gods", out of which creativity springs.[4]

Dreiser's Drouet is characteristic of the classical Hermes, as a "pointer of the way"[5] who will introduce Carrie Meeber to "the mysteries of God and the secrets of nature" (p.230). It is to this transformation that the willing Carrie Meeber acquiesces.

Driven by longing for that which is beautiful, Carrie grapples with the most obvious thing at hand, the physical world, initially represented by Drouet's appearance. She begins unravelling the

"moral significance" of this "mystery of mysteries", the material world, whose "gold" -- or that which money can buy -- is to her the "soul of the arcane substance" (p.230). For Carrie, the magic of the great City, the maya[6] unfurled and surrounding her in its existential glamour, is the mystery of illusion she must ultimately solve if she is ever to find true beauty. She must penetrate through to the core of the material world, dissipate the illusion and discover what is meaningful, lasting, and, ultimately, real. Her journey to the center is one of the spirit, and of the body, in which the material must be relegated to its proper place in the scheme of things. It is not a journey that Carrie Meeber takes lightly. As she accepts money and clothing from Drouet, and in her subsequent actions,

> there was a touch of misgiving. The deeper she sank into the entanglement, the more she imagined that the thing hung upon the few remaining things that she had not done. Since she had not done so and so yet, there was a way out. (p.70P)

When she leaves Minnie's flat, however, Carrie has made a final choice. But what is notable about it is that she sees "possibilities" in her deepening relationship with Drouet. In spite of Minnie's lament, Carrie, "that little soldier of fortune" (p.74P), "is not actually anguished. [She] meets [her] unfolding fate by the minute and the hour as it comes" (p.74P). She seems prepared to take responsibility for her desires; thus she is a willing initiate, and chooses her own way, no matter how precarious it may at first seem. Minnie's dream foretells all:

> There was a deep pit which [Carrie and Minnie] were looking down into, -- they could see the curious wet stones far down where the wall disappeared in vague shadows. An old basket used for descending was hanging there, fastened by a worn rope.
>
> 'Let's get in,' said Carrie.
>
> 'Oh, no!' said Minnie.
>
> 'Yes, come on,' said Carrie.
>
> She began to pull the basket over, and now in spite of all protest she had swung over and was going down -- down.
>
> 'Carrie,' [Minnie] called, 'Carrie, come back,' but Carrie was far down now, and the shadow had swallowed her completely. (p.79P)

We see that " Carrie was reaching further out" (p.79P). For, perceptive as Dreiser has shown her to be, Carrie had

> conceived a true estimate of Drouet. To her, and indeed to all the world he was a nice, good-hearted man. There was nothing evil in the fellow. He gave her the money out of a good heart -- out of the realization of her want. . . . [I]n regard to his pursuit of women, he meant them no harm because he did not conceive of the relation which he hoped to hold with them as being harmful. He loved to make advances to women, to have them succumb to his charms, not because he was a cold-blooded, dark, scheming villain, but because his inborn desire urged him to that as a chief delight. (p.63P) [Elipsis mine]

Carrie Meeber, it seems, has met her alter-ego in Drouet: Evil was not in him. On the contrary there was kindliness, non-understanding, strong physical desire, vainglory (p.64P). He is a kindred soul; his desires lead him, just as Carrie's desires lead her. Their meeting intensifies their mutual ambitions. In a passage deleted from the original typescript, Dreiser had written: "Drouet looked over [Carrie] and saw something different. Somehow he liked the girl. She was of his own mould of flesh -- his feminine counterpart" (p.601P).

Drouet and Carrie now set up housekeeping in the apartment. And it is there, during the drab winter days, that Carrie Meeber, in her soliloquy of conscience, deeply considers the implications of her situation with Drouet:

> In the drag of such a grey day, the secret voice would reassert itself, feebly and more feebly, as the days passed on.
>
> 'Dawdler!' it would exclaim in such language as she would appreciate. 'Lingerer in the lap of ease.'
>
> 'No,' she would think. "What else could I do? I was so bad off. Where could I have gone? Not home again -- oh, I did not want to go there. I was in danger of being hungry. I had no clothes. Didn't I try?'
>
> 'Remember how men look upon what you have done,' said the voice.
>
> 'I have nice clothes,' she would hum to herself in spirit, drowning the urgent voice. 'They make me look so nice. I am safe. The world is not so bad now. It is not so dreadful -- what have I done?'
>
> The deference of men to one who pays his dues to them confers this belief at times.
>
> 'Step into the streets. Return to your home, be as you were. Escape!'
>
> 'I can't. I can't,' was her only reply.
>
> 'Out, woman. Into the streets. Preferably be wretched.'
>
> 'Where may I go?' she would reply. 'I am a poor girl. Look how I was treated. What would they think of me, if I came home?'
>
> 'Out of it all,' the voice would murmur at first, almost indistinct.
>
> 'Oh, my nice clothes,' the senses were saying. 'Oh!, the cold streets. Was that the wind whistling I heard? I have a fine cloak. I have gloves. I would be a machine again without these things. Oh, what can I do, what can I do?'
>
> Thus would she sway, thus would all men, similarly equipped, between this truth and that evil -- between this right and that wrong. It is all a weighing of advantage. And whoso is it so noble as to ever avoid evil, and who so wise that he moves ever in the direction of truth? (p.91P)

Now in a position to have all that she thought she desired, Carrie Meeber is concerned with a further value in her life, the content within material form. Thus it is that she considers the moral and social ramifications of her position with Drouet.

> [Carrie] was not enamoured of Drouet. A little living with him convinced her of that. She was more clever than he. In a dim way, she was beginning to see where he lacked. If it had not been for this, if she had not been able to measure and judge him in a way, she would have been worse off than she was. She would have adored him. . . . As it was, she wavered a little, slightly anxious at first to gain him completely, but later feeling at ease in waiting. She was not exactly sure what she thought of him -- what she wanted to do. (p.93P) [Elipsis mine]

She knew well that

> Drouet was a man whom it was impossible to bind to any one object long. He had but one idol -- the perfect woman. He found her enshrined in many a pretty petticoat. On his trade pilgrimages he was like to forget Carrie entirely. She came into his mind when all later divinities were out, or when he was on his way back to Chicago. (p.105P)

She also is realistic about her relationship: "I don't believe you ever intend to marry me, Charlie," Carrie said, ruefully (p.135P).

It seems that Carrie Meeber and Charles Drouet have only the form of their lives in common, while the content, the commitment of spirit, is missing. Still, it is a partnership in which, for the time, they are well suited. Thus it is not surprising that their interests could merge once again, significantly, through the medium of acting.

In fact, Drouet, an actor in so far as marriage is considered, is also impressed by acting and the theatre. Whatever else he is,

> [H]e only craved the best as his mind conceived it, . . . Rector's, with its polished marble walls and floor, its profusion of lights, its show of china and silverwear, *and above all its reputation as a resort for actors* and professional men, seemed to him the proper place for a successful man to go. (p.42P) [Elipsis and italics mine]

Drouet frequented Rector's because, in part, "Joseph Jefferson [a famous actor] was wont to come to this place [and] Henry E. Dixey, a quite well-know performer of the day, was there, only a few tables off" (p.42P). [Elipsis mine]

Dreiser carefully gives acting, actors, and the theatre growing consideration; Hurstwood, who has by now arrived on the scene, knows by name, and is able to greet personally, "hundreds of actors, merchants, politicians" (p.43P). The gentlemen who frequent the bar speak continuously of theatre notables: "'Why he's manager of the Grand Opera House'" (p.42P). Indeed, when Drouet leaves Rector's on the particular night Dreiser is discussing, he is heading to the "Grand" (p.46P). Hurstwood asks him, "'Are you going anywhere tonight?' '"A Hole in the Ground",' said Drouet, mentioning the popular farce of the time." (p.48P)

Thus Carrie Meeber is introduced to the theatre and to the world of acting by Charles Drouet. Confronted with the problem of finding an actress for his "lodge entertainment" (p.155P), he speaks to Carrie: "'They're going to give a play and they wanted me to get them some young lady to take a part.'" (p.144P) "'Suddenly [Drouet] looked up. 'Say,' he said, 'how would you like to take the part?'" (p.155P) Carrie Meeber's direction is irrevocably

altered. Her eyes brightened, for if there was anything that "enlisted her sympathies, it was the art of the stage" (p.155P). Thus it is that through the butterfly, Charles Drouet, Carrie is introduced to the material world she so desired, and immersed in the artistic world in which she is destined to live. She is introduced, as well, to George Hurstwood, the consummate actor, that "starched and conventional poser among men" (p.105P).

Footnotes to Chapter III

[1] J. C. Cooper, An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971) 40.

[2] 40. Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Creative Mythology (New York: Viking Penquin Books Ltd.) 26.

[3] Sallie Nichols, Jung and Tarot: An Archetypal Journey (Maine: Samual Weiser, Inc., 1980) 49.

[4] Cooper 61, 192.

[5] C. J. Jung. Alchemical Studies The Collected Works of C. G. Jung. McGuire et al. eds. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. 3d. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) 230.

[6] Jean Varenne, Yoga and the Hindu Tradition trans. D. Coultman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976) 143.

Chapter IV

Apprenticeship: Chicago and New York

Before Carrie Meeber can act effectively on the stage, she must have something significant to say. Action and dialogue will be provided by a script, but she must interpret them. She must first live; then she can act.

For her stage debut, Carrie plays melodrama, which, at the time, is suitable for her limited experience. But if she is to be a good actress, she will have to draw from a deep, full range of personal experience. Her relationship with George Hurstwood teaches her about dishonesty, selfishness, arrogance, apathy, and despair. This knowledge deepens her as a person and ultimately supports her technique on the stage. Only after she has been tutored by Hurstwood and his fate does Robert Ames appear to guide her the rest of the way.

Hurstwood is a man who acts his way into the confidence of women. Unaware of his deceptions, women allow him to manipulate them to serve his selfish ends. He is thus a skilled and calculating seducer of women.

> Schooled in winning those birds of fine feather among his own sex, . . . he could use even greater tact when endeavouring to prove agreeable to someone who charmed him. . . . giving the impression he wished to be of service only. (p.93P) [Elipses mine]

In order to delude both Carrie and Drouet, Hurstwood builds up

Carrie's ego by manipulating the card game to see that Carrie wins (p.95P), thus putting her in a good frame of mind for the evening. He fakes his relationship with Drouet by modulating his voice so that Carrie will not see through his ploy, and he takes on "the air of a mere friend" (p.95P). In order to hide his crude intentions, he "took back the shifty, clever gleam [in his eye] and replaced it with one of innocence" when looking at Carrie (p.95P). By the end of the evening, the deception is in place. In the first of many symbols Dreiser deployed to reveal Hurstwood's deceitful inner nature, the black carriage waits in the night, "its red lamps gleaming cheerfully in the shadow" (p.96P).

After Hurstwood stages his first approach to Carrie, he continues with a charade of misleading lies. His motive is masked beneath silken words; as he speaks of "men and pleasures" (p.117P), he is able to

> make Carrie wish to see similar things, and all the while he kept her aware of himself. She could not shut out the consequences of his individuality and presence for a moment. He would raise his eyes slowly . . . and she was fixed by their magnetism. He would draw out with the easiest grace her approval. (p.117P) [elipsis mine]

Hurstwood is acting, while Carrie is his captivated audience. He knows exactly how to move his eyes until, in his conversations, Carrie "heard instead the voices of the things which he represented" (p.118P).

The most important thing that Carrie must grasp is that beauty is not the only voice that speaks; all forces may speak, "Good and

Evil, thou and I" (p.119P). Now Minnie's dream seems prophetic, for Carrie is moving steadily closer to "waters she [has] never seen" (p.79P): the rivers of her own imagination, mixed with those desires now stirred by Hurstwood and "blurring strange scenes one with the other" (p.79P).

Hurstwood's mesmerizing performance appears to be succeeding. Blindly confident, he thinks himself "master of the situation" (p.120P); he "assumed he struck a deep chord" (p.120P). "He felt the critical character of the moment" (p.79P) and imagined Carrie to be "falling" (p.79P) under his power. But in Hurstwood's drive to seduce Carrie, he is himself falling -- under the power of his own unleashed desire (p.105P). His habitual acting has forced him out of control. Drawn to the "something childlike in [Carrie's] large eyes" (p.105P), and seeking, perhaps, an adoring audience to captivate with his words, Hurstwood fails to recognize her inner strength. Carrie is "elect in her field by reason of her sensitive receptive nature" (p.158P); in touch with feeling and instinct, she is capable of surviving the assault upon her integrity that Hurstwood is planning. Hurstwood, lost in his act, has unwittingly picked the apple of his own undoing in the form of Carrie Meeber.

In contrast to George Hurstwood's polished -- if misdirected -- acting skills off the stage, Carrie Meeber began as a talented amateur.

> [She] was possessed of that sympathetic, impressionable nature, which, even in its most developed form, has been the glory of the drama. She was created with that passivity of soul which is al-

> ways the mirror of the active world. She possessed an innate taste for imitation and no small ability. Even without practice, she could sometimes restore dramatic situations she had witnessed by recreating, before her mirror, the expressions of the various faces taking part in the scene. She loved to modulate her voice after the conventional manner of the distressed heroine, and repeat such pathetic fragments as appealed most to her sympathies. Of late, seeing the airy grace of the ingenue in several well-constructed plays, she had been moved secretly to imitate it, and many were the little movements and expressions of the body which she indulged in from time to time in the privacy of her chamber. On several occasions, when Drouet had caught her admiring herself, . . . she was doing nothing more than recalling some little grace of the mouth or the eyes which she had witnessed in another. Under his airy accusation she mistook this for vanity and accepted the blame with a faint sense of error, *though as a matter of fact it was nothing more than the first subtle outcroppings of an artistic nature, endeavouring to recreate the perfect likeness of some phase of beauty which had appealed to her. In such feeble tendencies, be it known, such outworkings of desire to reproduce life, lies the basis of all dramatic art*. (p.157P) [Elipsis and italics mine]

In the beginning, Carrie's expression of feeling was her strongest asset. When she rehearsed for her part in "Under the Gaslight", "she read [passages] with remarkable expression for a novice" (p.161P). Her power is at its fullest when the part "remind[s] her somehow of her own state. She caught the infection of sorrow, sympathized with it wholly and consequently mastered it easily" (p.163P). Both Drouet and Hurstwood noticed that "the girl had capabilities" (p.164P). Carrie's power is such, when she speaks of things close to her heart, that both Hurstwood and Drouet are, for at least a moment, caught up in a finer emotion than either knows, or than either will retain on the street. "Hurstwood

resolved a thousand things -- Drouet as well" (p.193P).

Once Carrie experienced live theatre, "it made a deep impression upon her. It opened for her as if for its own" (p.177P) [Elipsis mine]. As a result of her success on stage, Carrie realized she could possibly make a living by acting. In her new awareness she felt "that subtle change" elevate her from "the ranks of the suppliants into the lines of the dispensers of charity" (p.198P). Hurstwood fails to notice this inner change in her which begins a role reversal between the two.

Carrie's success on the stage and her newly won self-confidence are propitious in the face of Hurstwood's lies and the break up with Drouet. When she realizes she could soon be "on the street without a place to lay her head . . she felt it necessary to act" (p. 247P) [Elipsis mine]. At the same time Carrie came to an ethical decision in regard to her future. "She looked for nothing save what might come legitimately and without the appearance of special favour. She wanted something, but no man should buy her by false protestations or favor. She proposed to earn her living honestly" (p.249P).

Carrie makes her decision for an ethical future on a Saturday, in the <u>exact</u> center of the novel. The following Sunday, as she realized "that action -- immediate action -- was imperative she [thought] of Drouet's advice about going on the stage" (p.249P) [Elipsis mine]. She set out to seek work again in Chicago; it is a dismal round of interviews with salacious men.

While Carrie struggles alone with her problem of money, Hurstwood becomes "flushed with the fumes of liquor" (p.266P). His instinct for avoiding wrong dulled to the point where he is "unable to bring himself to *act definitely*" [italics mine] (p.270P), he soon allows fate to decide the future for both of them. Acquiescing to the theft that soon drives him from the city, he tricks Carrie onto the train.

Once in Montreal, Hurstwood encounters a detective who approaches him for the stolen money. He decides to return most of it in the faint hope that Hanna and Hogg might take him back. By now, Carrie has "resumed somewhat of her cold attitude" toward him (p.295P). But since she is still with him, Hurstwood succumbs of habit to the opportunity at hand, intent on "getting what joy out of it he could" (p.300P). He approaches her in a "wooing spirit" and soon "longed for a complete matrimonial union" (p.300P). In thrall to his desires again, he has soon convinced himself that Carrie is "the one ray of sunshine in all his trouble" (p. 300P), that if she would love him "wholly" (p.300P), "it would show him he had not lost all" (p.300P). Thoroughly caught up in his own act, he "dropped down on one knee beside her chair" (p.300P) replete with baited cliches: "'Let me be everything to you from now on,' he said. 'I'll be true to you.'. 'we'll be happy.'. .'Won't you be mine?'" (p.300-301P) [Elipses mine]. When Carrie balks, Hurstwood resorts to staging a false marriage in order to achieve his goal. Hogg's letter arrives soon after this, and

"Hurstwood read his doom" (p.302P). Sneaking out of Montreal at night in fear of arrest, he flees with Carrie to New York.

Hurstwood's defeat inadvertently becomes the means to Carrie's success, for New York is where her future as an actress eventually unfolds. The way she reacts to problems demonstrates her growing creative power. She has an ability to make a good situation out of what appears to be an impossibly bad one.

> The great city held something, she knew not what. Possibly, she would come out of bondage into freedom -- who knows? Perhaps she would be happy. *These were thoughts, which in the thinking raised her above the level of the erring. She was saved in that she was hopeful.* (p.290P) [Italics mine]

In a very short time New York captures Carrie's imagination, just as Chicago did before. Mrs. Vance, a pianist whose talent "bordered, for Carrie, upon the verge of great art" (p.324P), invites Carrie to attend a matinee. The play, "A Gold Mine", is the first Carrie has seen since she left Chicago. As Carrie walks with Mrs. Vance to the theatre, the fine shops, the bustle and energy of New York spur her longing for a beautiful life even more than Chicago once did. By the time she arrives at the theatre, she is in "an exceedingly receptive mood" (p.324P).

> For Carrie, . . . the stage had great attraction. She had never forgotten her one histrionic achievement in Chicago. It dwelt in her mind and occupied her consciousness during many long afternoons in which her rocking chair and her latest novel contributed the only pleasures of her state. Never could she witness a play without having her own ability vividly brought to consciousness. Some scenes made her long to be a part of them -- to give expression to the feelings which she, in the place of the character represented, would feel.

> Almost invariably she would carry the vivid imaginations away with her and brood over them the next day alone. She lived as much in these imaginary things as in the realities which made up her daily life.
>
> *It was not often that she came to the play stirred to her heart's core by actualities. Today, a low song of longing had been set singing in her heart.* (p.325P) [Elipsis and italics mine]

Soon, the contrast between Hurstwood's inactivity and Carrie's longing brings about her dissatisfaction. During the period of his decline, Carrie becomes increasingly aware of the implications to herself and struggles for a solution. She soon learns the things she did not know before: despite his distinguished appearance and financial aura, he is utterly unreliable, lies readily, is not willing to make an effort to find employment. In addition, he has a poor attitude toward women. He thinks they often "get on the stage in some cheap way" and remarks, "[Acting's] not much of a profession for a woman" (p.378P).

Thus Carrie experiences Hurstwood's spiritual and physical decline as a painful means of refining her own perception. Unable to function without his familiar props, Hurstwood, an actor without a stage, succumbs to a powerlessness from which he seems unable to escape. In a chesslike pattern that began with the open safe, he retreats to Montreal, to New York, to smaller and smaller apartments, to his room, his bed, and eventually - - extinguishing his own light with the gas lamp in his room - - to his coffin, and finally, his grave.

As a result of her disillusionment, the former melodramatic

mode which Carrie had earlier used to express herself is now grounded in painful reality. The impact of this suffering, recalled through experience, serves as source of emotional power from which she is now able to draw. She has only to hone, polish, and direct her technical skills toward a suitable play.

Orchestrating Carrie's feelings like a memory from some distant play is the image of her father, who serves as an archetype of work and suffering. As a result of her father's hard life, Carrie's "sympathies were ever with the underworld of toil" (p.146P) from which she herself "had so recently sprung" (p.146P). The sensitivity she has because of this is an intrinsic part of her "beauty", and comes from "below a depth of water" neither Drouet nor Hurstwood could fathom (p.146P). The old miller's worn face stands for that of each labouring man and woman. He peers through the window of Carrie's soul, reminding her of the poverty and suffering below the surface of the scintillating world. Her awareness of this suffering, reinforced by her own experiences, places her in close accord with the hopes and longings of every struggling man and woman.

Robert Ames explains the meaning of Carrie's acting gift and the significance of her artistic calling. Ames "squares the circle" of her artistic development, creating an "inner readiness to accept the archetype of [her]self in whatever subjective form it appears"[1] He is like a director who challenges, rebukes, and supports Carrie, bringing her into intellectual awareness as she

strives toward her goal of thoughtful, serious acting.

Ames welcomes Carrie into his world with the greeting, "'I'm very glad to meet you'" (p.329P). An "exceedingly genial soul", he is "free of affectation", " well dressed and wholly courageous" (p.329P). In contrast to both Drouet and Hurstwood, "there was nothing of the dashing ladies' man about him. He had respect for the married state and thought only of some pretty marriageable girls in Indianapolis" (p.330P). "[H]e did not drink" and, though financially sound, thought it "a shame for people to spend so much money" on lavish restaurants, paying "much more than [the] things are worth" (p.333P).

Carrie is surprised by and attentive to Ames' "seriousness" (p.334P). In light of her other relationships, she is now in a better position to evaluate his merits. She finds Ames to be "better educated than she was -- that his mind was better" (p.334P). He reminds her of a "scholar" who "seem[s] to get ahold of things which she did not quite understand, but approved of" (p.334P). For the first time she "felt the pain of not understanding" (p.335P). "This man was far ahead of her. He seemed wiser than Hurstwood, saner and wiser than Drouet. He seemed innocent and clean, and she thought that he was exceedingly pleasant" (p.335P). Another thing she notices is his comment about wealth: "'A man doesn't need this sort of thing to be happy'" (p.336P). "[C]oming from him it had weight with her" (p.336P). His strong interest in the theatre inspires her to ask," 'Don't you

think it's rather fine to be an actor?'" (p.336P). "'Yes -- I do,' Ames said. 'To be a good one. I think the theatre's a great thing'" (p.336P). "Just this little approval set Carrie's heart bounding. Ah, if she could only be an actress -- a good one. This man was wise -- he knew -- and he approved of it. If she were a fine actress, such men as he would approve of her" (p.336P).

Carrie is at last "beginning to see" (p. 337P), and remembers Ames's words. During the waning days of her relationship with Hurstwood, a "change [is] effected". Carrie no longer views Hurstwood "as a lover or husband" (p. 337P). Hurstwood no longer looks for work because "his pride [has] stopped him" (p.377P). Now that he has revealed the truth about the staged marriage in Montreal, Carrie's confidence in him is dissolved. With the money quickly running out, "Carrie [becomes] frightened" (p.376P). She thus goes out to look for work in New York, her only experience the grim factory toil and the bright, though short, performance in one play. But her desire provides an answer for her;

> Frequently she had considered the stage as a door through which she might enter that gilded state which she had so much craved. Now, as in Chicago, it came as a last resource in distress. Something must be done if he did not get work soon. Perhaps she would go out and battle again alone. (p.377P)

Carrie is more confident about her job search in New York than she was in Chicago. She speaks up directly (p.381P), gathers the information she needs and leaves, unaffected by the "eyes of the men" she encounters (p.381P). She avoids the "dingy" offices, the agents, and theatres where "listless and indifferent individuals"

cause her to feel "insignificant and utterly inconsequential" (p.386P). Her business sense now sharpened, she "comes away wearily" from "every managerial office in the city (p.386P), because the "little proprietors of businesses" where the help "glory in their fine positions" induce in her the necessity to be "humble" and "without a vestige of self-respect" (p.385-386P). Finally, she speaks with a manager, and is hired. "Her heart bounded to her throat" (p.388P); she has a job performing in the theatre.

> On the morrow Carrie reported promptly and was given a place in the line. . . . The wonder of it awed and delighted her. Blessed be its wondrous reality. How hard she would try to be worthy of it. It was above the common mass, above idleness, above want, above insignificance. (p.389P) [Elipsis mine]

The "wonder" now gives way to the reality of hard work and days of tiring, difficult rehearsal. The director is of "strong insistence coupled with almost brutal roughness" who "seemed to wax exceedingly wroth over trifles and to increase his lung power in proportion" (p.390P). Further, he had "a great contempt for any assumption of dignity or innocence on the part of [the] young women" (p.390P); facing the prospects of his "vehement roar", "Carrie pitied, and trembled for her turn" (p.390P). When it came, "her cheeks burned with a crimson heat. Her lips trembled a little" (p.391P), but she did not quit, even after three hours of "constant urging, coupled with irascibility and energy" (p.391P). Rather, "[she] came away worn enough in body, but too excited in mind to notice it. She meant to go home and practice her evolutions as prescribed. She would not err in any way, if she

could help it" (p.391P). "She took only a mouthful to eat and then practised on, sustained by visions of freedom from financial distress, 'the sound of glory ringing in her ears'" (p.391P). All her duties give way to her one desire: to perform as well as she can. Carrie now sees that there are greater actresses "far, far above [her]", and that at this point, by comparison, she is "absolutely nothing at all" (p.391P).

Carrie is learning the skills of her trade from the ground up. From her actress friend, she is also learning how to manage her career and her finances. Eventually, she comes to think that her "future must be assured if [she] can always get work this way" (p.398P).

In very little time Carrie's efforts begin to reward her. The pleasing and distinctive air (p.397P) with which she moved, due "wholly to her natural manner and total lack of self-consciousness" (p.397P), combined with her good looks (p.400P) serves to attract the attention of the manager. "'She knows how to carry herself'", he remarks, and places her in a lead position (p.401P).

Carrie has now met several men, but "[a]fter Drouet and Hurstwood, there was the least touch of cynicism in her attitude toward [them], especially [young men] of the gay and frivolous sort" (p.404P). Although "youth appealed to her", she is bored listening to them "voicing those silly pleasantries and weak quips which pass for humour in coy circles" (p.404P). Her need for intelligent conversation brings her back to memory of Robert Ames (p.405P).

> At his figure her mind halted. It was a strong clean vision. She could see his fine brow now, his dark hair and strong nose. He liked better books than she read, better people than she associated with. His ideal burned in her heart.
>
> 'It's fine to be a good actress,' came distinctly back. (p.405P)

The important question finally occurs to Carrie: "What sort of actress was she" (p.405P)? She is now concerned with the quality of her performances because, among other things, she has had "a taste of what it is to grow weary of the idler" (p.430P). As well, when Hurstwood returned from his Brooklyn streetcar venture, "[h]er heart sank at the sight"; she knew "it imported failure" (p.430P).

In contrast, Carrie is moving up. By what appears to be good fortune, she has an opportunity to respond to the lead actor in her latest play. It seems to be a call for total commitment to the stage; when asked "in a profound voice", "'Well, who are you?'" her "experience and belief in herself gave her daring"; she replied, "'I am yours truly'" (p.431P).

> Timid as [she] was, she was strong in capability. The reliance of others made her feel as if she must, and when she must she dared. Experience of the world and of necessity were in her favour. No longer the lightest word of a man made her head dizzy. She had learned that men could change and fail. Flattery in its most palpable form had lost its force with her. It required superiority -- kindly superiority, to move her -- the superiority of a genius like Ames. (p.432P)

A short time later Carrie has "decided to move" (p.435P). "Her heart misgave her" one last time (p.435P) when she looked at Hurstwood; her compassion, surfacing, brings her back to memories "of the bitterness of search and poverty" in her own life. "There was

something cruel somewhere" but as yet she was "not able to track it mentally to its logical lair" (p.437P). While Carrie is puzzling over this question, Hurstwood, still playing on Carrie's good nature, or so he thinks, goes for a stroll in the sun. Anticipating his usual evening meal in the warm room they share, he returns to find her gone.

Carrie is now fully aware of her power on the stage, and has become "wise in theatrical lore". For a time, the "showy world in which her interests lay completely absorbed her" (p.442P). There are men, one "pleasant", but there is "nothing compelling about him" (p.444P). When he makes an advance to Carrie, she refuses "with a quiet air of understanding" (p.444P). Carrie has learned something more important:

> The metropolis is a cold place socially and Carrie soon found that a little money brought her nothing. The world of wealth and distinction was quite as far away as ever. She could feel that there was no warm, sympathetic friendship back of the easy merriment with which many approached her. All seemed to be seeking their own amusement, regardless of the possible sad consequences to others. So much for the lessons of Hurstwood and Drouet. (p.445P)

Carrie's simple good nature does not change as she rises in stature in the theatre. "The pride and daring of place was not for her. It never once crossed her mind to be reserved or haughty -- to be other than that she had been" (p.455P). She knows now that it "does not take money long to make plain its impotence" (p.457P). She is also aware of the significance of good acting;

one of her reviewers comments that she is "'merely pretty, good-natured, and lucky'. This cut her like a knife" (p.458P). She has finally reached the place where it struck her that "the door to life's perfect enjoyment was not open" (p.458P). The glamour has become boring; the people are the wrong kind (p.458P). "Unconsciously, her [own] idle hands were beginning to weary her" (p.458P).

Significantly, the idle hands of both Drouet and Hurstwood now reappear, outstretched in Carrie's direction. Drouet, still of "exuberant good nature" and in "the same fine clothes" (p.472P), shows up at the stage door where she is performing. "He was but slightly changed" (p.472P); his optimism seems an extension of the support he originally gave Carrie for the stage. "'I always said you could act'" (p.473P), he reminds her. He also recalls a more questionable habit: "he gazed at her dress, her hair [and then] into her eyes" (p.473P) [Elipsis mine], trying to reestablish "their old friendship at once and without modification" (p.473P). Carrie "understood him better now -- understood the type". "[T]he world had taught her so much" (p.473P); now, the only thing Drouet has of interest to Carrie is the story about Hurstwood's theft.

That same night, almost symbolically, Carrie had passed Hurstwood, who was waiting at the Casino, "without observing him" (p.476P), in much the same way she initially failed to observe his true nature. Later, equipped with her new insight, "she encountered Hurstwood face to face" (p.477P); at the sight of his

"shabby, baggy figure" (p.477), she feels sorry for him. "Still she remembered what Drouet had said about his having stolen the money" (p.477P). "He frightened her, edging so close, a seemingly hungry stranger" (p.477P). Although Carrie is much changed, Hurstwood's fallen state reminds her of her own close call with poverty and degradation. But only Hurstwood's appearance has changed. Although he is penniless, dirty, and hungry, he is still riddled with pride and anger, accepting money from her "peevishly, almost resenting her excessive pity" (p.477P). "It came hard to him to receive [money] from such a source" (p.477P). Hurstwood is still a victim of his own perception; in his mind he thinks that life indiscriminately distributes its rewards. He has not yet made any apparent connection between Carrie's success and her effort. His clouded mind has affected him to such an extent that "[h]e seemed in a way to resent [Carrie's] kindly inquiries -- so much better had fate dealt with her" (p.477P).

Dreiser seems to have briefly recalled Drouet and Hurstwood as a means of comparison to Ames. Now, as Hurstwood shuffles off to the "east" (p.477P), Ames returns from the "west" (p.478P).

Omnisciently, Robert Ames seems to have a specific purpose in mind for Carrie Meeber:"'Oh, it isn't the play that I care about,'" he tells her; "'[i]t's you I'm coming to see'" (p.480). In spite of Carrie's failed relationship with Hurstwood, which she apparently thinks of "wistfully" (p.482P), Ames tells her, "'Failure in love isn't so much'" (p.482P). "'It's the man who fails in his

mind who fails completely'" (p.482P). "'No one has exactly what his heart wishes'" (p.482P). At these remarks, Carrie thinks "of her own short struggle"; she had felt "as if her whole life had been one of turmoil, for which her present state was no reward" (p.483P). Ames "seemed to have reached the state of her mind without talking" (p.483P).

Robert Ames is the ultimate actor. He has been able to draw Carrie out of the confusion that undermined her confidence and threatened her continued ascent on the stage. Somehow Ames was able to reach Carrie's mind without talking; he "felt the shock of sympathy, keen and strong" (p.483P). Through him a catharsis is now effected in Carrie. "[W]incing in conscience", she admits that she has not yet approached her goal of serious dramatic art. "'I haven't [gone into comedy-drama] so far. I want to, though'" (p.483P). The core of apathy that overwhelmed Hurstwood is recalled. It is another failure to "act definitely" (p.270P), as revealed through Carrie's reply: "'Sometimes I don't seem to be able to do much of anything'" (p.484P). Ames makes one suggestion: "'Well,' he said, . perhaps you're too comfortable. That often kills a person's ambition. Many people fail because they succeed too quickly'" (p.485P) [Elipsis mine].

Whatever the reason, Ames is sure of one thing about Carrie:

> 'I know why, if you tried, you would be a success, because I know the quality of that thing which your face represents. The world is always struggling to express itself -- to make clear its hopes and sorrows and give them voice. It is always seeking the means, and it will delight in the individual who can

> express these things for it. That is why we have great musicians, great painters, great writers and actors. They have the ability to express the world's sorrows and longings, and the world gets up and shouts their names. All effort is just that. It is the thing which the world wants portrayed, written about, graven, sung or discovered, not the portrayer or writer or singer, which makes the latter great. You and I are but mediums, through which something is expressing itself. Now, our duty is to make ourselves ready mediums.' (p.485P)

Ames addresses the enigma of the artist:

> 'You and I,' said Ames -- 'what are we? We don't know where we came from nor where we are going to. Tomorrow you might die and dissolve and I could search high and low in all the winds and waters and not find you. Here you are a mere expression of something -- you know not what. It so happens that you have the power to [create]. That is no credit to you. You might not have had it. It isn't an excuse for either pride or self-glorification. You paid nothing to get it. But now that you have it, you must do something with it.' (p.485P)

The something better Carrie has searched for is the world of art. "'Every person according to his light,' said Ames. 'You must help the world express itself. Use will make your powers endure. . so long as they express something in you'" and are used "'for others'" (p.485P) [Elipsis mine]. "[All Ames] said appealed to Carrie as absolutely true" (p.486P); she now focuses on the light in his eyes. We know, however, that "Tomorrow [the light that leads Carrie] shall be on and further on"; her artistic calling will draw her again into relationship with the world until her desire, her "heartaches", and Carrie herself "shall be melted and dissolved" (p.487P).

Footnotes to Chapter IV

[1] Jung, Carl G. Alchemical Studies. McGuire et al. eds. 3d. ed. 20 vols. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Bollingen Series. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press) 86-87.

Coda

One of the questions raised by the end of the novel concerns Carrie's future relationship with Robert Ames. A significant topic in view of Carrie's two previous relationships, it has been considered by historical Editors Berkey and Winters and by textual Editor West. One of the more provocative comments, a textual interpretation allowed to stand in the historical commentary of the Pennsylvania Edition states: "Dreiser makes it plain in his first ending that any hopes Carrie might have for happiness and satisfaction with Ames are doomed" (p.515P) [underlining mine].

This writer, however, proposes that Dreiser implied a future involvement between Carrie and Ames, that marriage between them was a strong possibility, and that Carrie's hopes for "happiness and satisfaction with Ames" were not necessarily "doomed" (p.515P).

Such a denouement is neither maudlin nor melodramatic for a writer such as Dreiser. For Carrie, marriage could well symbolize "the intimate union or inner conciliation" required "within the process of [her] individuation"[1]. For her artistic development, marriage could take place at a spiritual or alchemical level, uniting her with her "unconscious [masculine] side", and thus "with [her] spirit" (p.204). From such a union, the alchemical *coniunctio*, or hierosgamos, for example, springs the *filius [filia] sapientiae*[2], in this case the wise daughter gifted to speak to the

world through her creative dramatic voice.

A marriage between Carrie and Ames could thus signify the completion of Carrie's spiritual growth, the "integration of [her]self and [her] art"[3], because marriage, as sacred state, "is connected with a rebirth myth"[4]. In this manner, marriage is not experienced solely on a physical or material level,

> but on a higher, psychic one as the union of God with his congregation (the corpus mysticum). . . . [T]he projection of the hierosgamos signifies the conjunction of conscious and unconscious, the transcendent function characteristic of the [artistic] individuation process. (p.433) [Elipsis mine]

Thus for Carrie, as for all artists, there would be no doom, for

> [l]ife is not lessened in artists as prophets, but is enhanced. [Artists] are our guides into the Lost Paradise, which only becomes Paradise through being found again. It is not the old, mindless unity that the artist strives for, but a felt reunion; not empty unity, but full unity, not the oneness of indifference, but the oneness attained through differentiation. . . . All life is a loss of balance and a struggling back into balance. (p.324 n.31) [Elipsis mine]

On a more mundane level, the balance called for by Dreiser throughout the novel could also be resolved by a married relationship. In fact, we are led to speculate whether the "something more" includes this relationship as part of the elusive ideal Carrie so fervently seeks. As critic William Handy remarks: "Why this unseen, unnamed presence [the "something more"] should hold the key to the effective artistic meaning of the novel is the great challenge for Dreiser criticism.[5]

For Dreiser has made it plain that Carrie, in both previous

relationships, longed for marriage. He also revealed that Ames "had respect for the married state" (p.530P). Therefore, it would seem that any involvement between them would go beyond mere cohabitation. Critic Claude Simson concluded: "Whatever Carrie's past has been, "[i]n all three episodes [Drouet, Hurstwood, Ames] involving vital moral decisions Dreiser shows that his acceptance of an amoral universe is not thoroughgoing. He is not really comfortable in throwing over the conventionalities he presumes to scorn."[6]

The problem, if there is one to consider, lies in the fact that although Carrie sought marriage as a means to "secure her rights as a good woman" (p.209P), she never pursued marriage as her only goal, or even as her overriding interest. Carrie Meeber longed for "beauty" over everything else. According to Dreiser she will continue to seek this beauty "until thought is not with [her] and heartaches are no more" (p.487P). But this does not necessarily preclude a happy or satisfying marriage with Ames, for through her pain Carrie has grown beyond the illusion of romantic love. From her affection for Hurstwood, whom she "had loved" (p.231P) "much as the magnificence of God" (p.129P), she came to realize him "wholly as a man and not as a lover or a husband" (p.324P). Her feelings then evolved through a gamut of emotions from "contempt" (p.1364P), to "hate" (p.370P), to shame (p.399P) and to "weariness" (p.430P) as she learned "that men could change and fail" (p.432P). Only after this painful realization did her

feelings grow more refined; she then began to see Hurstwood as "pathetic" (p.435P), to "sympathize keenly" (p.435P) with him until, at last, "[i]nstead of hatred springing up, there was a kind of sorrow generated" (p.475P), a sorrow that at last turns to "pity" (p.477P).

This metamorphosis of Carrie's feeling indicates a final refinement of her artistic sensibility, for she now knows that the illusion of love dissolves. The light that now attracts Carrie is not some romantic lovelight; rather, it appears to be Ames's enlightenment that appeals to her. His knowledge, his serious consideration of her artistic aspirations, and his meaningful advice "thrilled" (p.484) her because it showed that he took her seriously. "It was what her heart had craved for years" (p.484P).

Thus marriage between Carrie and Ames, a resolution that calls up "all the triteness of a Horatio Alger situation"[7], is easily transformed into a symbolic gesture that includes "the aspirations of the spirit"(p.53) in a material world, for Dreiser was an artist like Carrie Meeber whose nature "rebelled against accepting a futilitarian philosophy" (p.53). It no longer matters that the light "but now in [Ames's] eyes" will soon be "melted and dissolved" (p.487P); the light that leads Carrie will neither melt nor dissolve because it does not originate with Ames. Like Dreiser's presence in the novel, Ames's light is merely a reflection of the "supreme and inextinguishable glow [that] plays over the organic shimmer of the world"[8], a light that is to lead

Carrie "on and further on" (p.487P) in her pursuit of artistic perfection.

Footnotes to Coda

[1] J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols 2nd. ed. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971) 204.

[2] C. J. Jung, Alchemical Studies McGuire et al. eds. 3d. ed. 20 vols. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Bollingen Series. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press) 155.

[3] Wm. J. Handy, "A Re-examination of Dreiser's SISTER CARRIE," Texas Studies in Literature and Language 2 (Spring, 1959) 387.

[4] C. J. Jung, Symbols of Transformation McGuire et al. eds. 3d. ed. 20 vols. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Bollingen Series. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press) 244.

[5] Handy 387.

[6] Claude Simpson, Jr., "Sister Carrie Reconsidered," Southwest Review I, No. 1, (Winter, 1959): 51.

[7] Handy 389.

[8] Pierre Tielhard de Chardin, Toward the Future, Trans. Rene Hague. (London: St. James Place) 34.

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