The women in "Sister Carrie"

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THE WOMEN IN SISTER CARRIE

A Thesis

Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of English
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Mary Jackson Lutz
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
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ABSTRACT

In the fall of 1900, after a contractual disagreement between Theodore Dreiser and Doubleday, Page and Company, *Sister Carrie* finally appeared before the American public. The publication of his first novel was not a victory for Theodore Dreiser, however, for the reviews were generally unfavorable and publishers refused to see him, believing that he had written a "dirty" book. In the Seattle *Post Intelligencer* (January 20, 1901), for example, the reviewer wrote "Even Mr. Dreiser's antiseptic style cannot make it anything but a most unpleasant tale, and you would never dream of recommending it to another person to read." The *Toledo Blade* (December 8, 1900) described *Sister Carrie* as "... a gloomy story, and, while it is well told, it is too unrealistic, to [sic] sombre to be altogether pleasing." Dreiser was devastated by the general reaction to *Sister Carrie*, and he spent eleven years gathering the courage to begin another novel.

Although several critics grudgingly conceded that *Sister Carrie* was a novel destined for greatness, (the *Newark Sunday News* commented that "... its merits are those which betray great talent--possibly genius. ...") the public was scandalized and outraged at the novel's treatment of sex. After all, the well-bred realism of William Dean Howells was difficult enough to accept. *A Modern Instance* had caused a great deal of consternation because of its frank treatment of divorce, and the American public seems to have been pushed as far as its moral dictates would allow. In fact, Howells himself professed an intense dislike for *Sister Carrie*.

The reader is *Sister Carrie* too often falls into the trap of analyzing Carrie only as she functions in her relationships with the men of the novel. The other women of *Sister Carrie* remain generally ignored. To ignore the women of *Sister Carrie*, however, is to deny a significant aspect of the novel. This paper will examine Carrie and her relationships with the other women who appear in the novel. Through them, one may approach a definition of Carrie herself.
In the fall of 1900, after a contractual disagreement between Theodore Dreiser and Doubleday, Page and Company, *Sister Carrie* finally appeared before the American public. The publication of his first novel was not a victory for Theodore Dreiser, however, for the reviews were generally unfavorable and publishers refused to see him, believing that he had written a "dirty" book. In the Seattle *Post Intelligencer* (January 20, 1901), for example, the reviewer wrote "Even Mr. Dreiser's antiseptic style cannot make it anything but a most unpleasant tale, and you would never dream of recommending it to another person to read." The Toledo *Blade* (December 8, 1900) described *Sister Carrie* as "... a gloomy story, and, while it is well told, it is too unrealistic, to [sic] sombre to be altogether pleasing." Dreiser was devastated by the general reaction to *Sister Carrie*, and he spent eleven years gathering the courage to begin another novel.

In order to understand *Sister Carrie* and the moral indignation with which it was greeted, it is necessary to understand the literary climate of America at the turn of the century. In "Sentimentalism in Dreiser's Heroines," Daryl C. Dance maintains that sentimental fiction in America was patterned for the most part after Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, the first novel printed in America, and *Clarissa*. 
American writers, using Richardson's works as models, proceeded to create sentimental tales which made use of an almost standardized plot and stock characters. However, the American sentimental heroine differed from the English sentimental heroine. While the heroines of *Pamela* and *Clarissa* desperately tried to avoid seduction (a fate worse than death), American heroines "... were designed to represent the whole range of attitudes and ideals, achievements and failures, that defined civilization in the United States. They embodied its morals, argued its politics, symbolized its aspirations." Thus, while the American sentimental novel borrowed some elements of form and style from Richardson, they were adapted to fit the American experience.

A domesticated American version of English writing in the age of sensibility, it conceived its own idiom, its own code, and its own characteristic heroine. Like English fiction, it chose those women who possessed a certain wizardry of the spirit; American girls, however, put their genius to work on specifically national problems. Of course they continued to share certain traits with sentimental English heroines. Both had God's ear: their prayers were not expressions of devotion but consultations with a Colleague.

The intense religiosity of the American sentimental heroine is an interesting aspect of her nature, for she felt that it was her ordained mission to spiritualize and refine the men with whom she came in contact. Yet it was also her self-appointed duty to inspire man with the courage and sense of divine purpose which would lead him to help fulfill America's destiny.

While this patriotic spirituality is undoubtably an
admirable quality in the American sentimental heroine, it often took a slightly perverse turn. The sentimental novel of early nineteenth-century America often featured heroines who eagerly anticipated a sweetly spiritual premature death. Those women who had been told that only the good die young kept a constant watch for the early signs of physical degeneration. Everyone admired the heroine who languished:

Heroines with 'an attractive pallor' had an unfair advantage with men; the pages of sentimental fiction record few examples of 'interesting' healthy females. Gentlemen preferred declines. America, then, developed its own tradition of cloying (but patriotic) sentiment, following in the footsteps of Pamela and Clarissa. Gradually, however, the American sentimental novel was forced to adapt itself to the changing conventions of the times.

In the twenty years which preceded the publication of Sister Carrie in 1900, the "working girl" novel, industrial America's own version of the English sentimental novel, became popular with the American public. The "working girl" novels attempted to fuse the traditions of the sentimental novel with the new demands of the Industrial Age. The themes of these novels generally had little or nothing to do with the heroine's vocation. Her attentions were focused instead upon securing ("trapping" is a more accurate word) a wealthy, socially prominent husband. This concern becomes obvious simply from the titles of several novels by Laura Jean Libbey, a prolific writer of these "working girl novels": Only a Mechanic's
Daughter: A Charming Story of Love and Passion; Little Leafy, the Cloakmaker's Beautiful Daughter: A Romantic Story of a Lovely Working-Girl in the City of New York, etc. The saccharine quality of these novels is obvious from the titles alone. The fact that the heroine works merely provides an excuse for what does become the main issue of the story. The "working girl" novels are much more concerned with how the blushing, virginal heroine deals with a series of men. Some, of course, are gentlemen, but even more are heartless scoundrels. These sentimental tales indeed seem to have derived from novels such as Pamela and Clarissa, and they are only thinly disguised by the soot of American industrialism. The attitude toward women during this period seems to have been somewhat ambivalent. Cheap labor was eagerly solicited by the American entrepreneur, and for this reason, women were welcomed as members of the work force. At the same time, however, it was feared that the experience would somehow brutalize them. American society found itself faced with an unprecedented alteration of traditional roles. Much of the literature produced during this time reflects society's struggle to come to terms with shifting social patterns.

The realism of Sister Carrie, however, generally affronted those who read it, for it presented a view of life so graphic and so distasteful to romantic palates that its realism was denied. Rather than acknowledge the validity of Dreiser's views, it became easier, and indeed, safer, to
dismiss the novel as unrealistic.

What, then, is one to make of Sister Carrie? What literary forces contributed to the creation of such novels? It is undoubtedly easier to define what American realists rebelled against than to arrive at a definition of realism itself.

While sentimental fiction remained popular with the majority of the American public for quite some time, among American writers there was nevertheless a growing dissatisfaction with pure sentiment:

In the 1880's the standard of realism was being raised in good part simply out of professional distaste for a polite literature that was rotten ripe with idealizing sentiment and genteel affectation.12 Life, said the realists, was infinitely more interesting than the pale imitations habitually dished up in the sentimental novels.13 Therefore, realists produced novels which dealt with commonplace, generally middle-class, occurrences. They focused their attention to a large degree on the immediate environment and on truths which were verifiable by experience.

Although Dreiser subscribed to the creed of the realists, Sister Carrie seems to lie somewhere in between sentimentalism and realism. There is a great deal of the romantic in Dreiser, and several critics have commented on the sentiment which pervades his novels and his autobiographical works:14

Much is made by his [Dreiser's] friendlier critics of the fact that just before the beginning of his writing career Dreiser discovered Balzac; much more should be made of the fact that before that encounter, his imagination had already been formed by . . . Laura Jean Libbey.15
Two of Dreiser's autobiographical works, *Dawn* and *A Book About Myself*, testify to the fact that Dreiser was profoundly influenced by the sentiment of his culture. Both are filled with flowery reflections on every subject imaginable: women, the nature of love, passion, evolution, art, etc. Dreiser even describes his own romantic escapades "... in terms of the popular romance." For example, he describes one of his sweethearts in the following fashion:

She seemed exquisite to me then, a trim, agreeable sylph of a girl, with a lovely oval face, stark red hair braided and coiled after the fashion of a Greek head, a clear pink skin, long, narrow, almond-shaped gray-blue eyes, delicate, graceful hands, a perfect figure, small well-formed feet. There was something of the wood or water nymph about her, a seeking in her eyes, a breath of wild winds in her hair, a scarlet glory to her mouth..."

The gushing sentiment which fills Dreiser's autobiographical works also characterizes the descriptive passages of *Sister Carrie*.

*Carrie* was indeed worth loving if ever youth and grace are to command that token of acknowledgement of life in bloom. ... Her soft eyes contained in their liquid lustre no suggestion of the knowledge of disappointment. ... The mouth had the expression at times, in talking and in repose, of one who might be on the verge of tears ... a formation as suggestive and moving as pathos itself.

Although Dreiser's language may be overly romantic at times, his treatment of nineteenth-century America is infused with a harsh reality. Critics generally agreed that while *Sister Carrie* was "... not a book to be put into the hands of every reader indiscriminately," its graphic portrayal of city life "... was so formidably convincing that no serious
view of reality could henceforth ignore it."^{20}

Although several critics grudgingly conceded that *Sister Carrie* was a novel destined for greatness, (the Newark *Sunday News* commented that "... its merits are those which betray great talent--possibly genius. ...")^{21} the public was scandalized and outraged at the novel's treatment of sex. After all, the well-bred realism of William Dean Howells was difficult enough to accept. *A Modern Instance* had caused a great deal of consternation because of its frank treatment of divorce, and the American public seems to have been pushed as far as its moral dictates would allow. In fact, Howells himself professed an intense dislike for *Sister Carrie*.^{22}

Dreiser's novel was considered disturbing for several reasons. Carrie loses her virginity and does not suffer the "wages of sin." In fact, she blossoms and grows more beautiful. She begins to understand

... those little modish ways which women adopt when they would presume to be something. She looked in the mirror and pursed up her lips, accompanying it with a little toss of the head. ... She caught up her skirts with an easy swing. ... She began to get the hang of those little things which the pretty woman who has vanity invariably adopts. In short, her knowledge of *grace* doubled, and with it her appearance changed. ( *Sister Carrie*, pp. 78-79)

Not only does Carrie lose her virginity to the first man who offers her material security, but she ruefully asks, "What is it I have lost?" (p. 60) There is no moralistic, authorial voice to tell the reader (as well as Carrie) just what it is she has lost, or to describe the punishment to be expected
for such an act. Carrie is never punished. Instead, she reaches the pinnacle of fame and fortune. Dreiser does not even seem to consider the possibility that Carrie could follow any other course of action. Her decision to sleep with Drouet seems to be a natural response to a society whose forces are out of her control. For Dreiser, man is only a small and insignificant part of a larger, uncontrollable reality.

Ultimately, *Sister Carrie* is shocking because the heroine trades sex for material wealth. "If *Sister Carrie* had been a screaming protest, if it had overthrown everything that society accepted, it might have had a succès de scandale ... its acceptance of sex as a marketable commodity was repugnant." Berthoff sees the outrage inspired by *Sister Carrie* as an expression of a deeply rooted fear that some work of " ... compelling frankness and emotional directness" would contribute to moral and social decay. Indeed, an even deeper fear was " ... that the predicted disaster had already occurred." Carrie Meeber absolutely embodies this fear of moral degeneration, and it is for this reason that her character poses a challenge to the reader, who too often falls into the trap of analyzing Carrie only as she functions in her relationships with men of the novel. The other women of *Sister Carrie* remain generally ignored. To ignore them, however, is to deny a significant aspect of the novel. This paper will examine Carrie and her relationships with the other women who appear in the novel. Through them, one may approach a fuller definition of Carrie herself.
The first woman Carrie encounters is her sister Minnie, who greets her in the Chicago train station. Carrie, at eighteen, has left her rural home to seek her fortune in the city. She has grandiose expectations of the life she is about to begin, and she is eager to gain the things for which she longs:

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, groveling at a woman's slipper. (Sister Carrie, p. 2)

Yet upon greeting her sister, Carrie begins to realize that the gulf between her romantic dreams and Minnie's dismal reality is impossibly vast:

A lean faced, rather commonplace woman recognized Carrie on the platform and hurried forward. 'Why, Sister Carrie!' she began, and there was a perfunctory embrace of welcome.

Carrie realized the change of affectional atmosphere at once. Amid all the maze, uproar, and novelty she felt cold reality taking her by the hand. No round of amusement. Her sister carried with her most of the grimness of shift and toil. (Sister Carrie, p. 8)

Carrie enters a situation which is emotionally barren. Upon arriving home from work, Minnie's husband receives no tender word of welcome, nor does he offer such a word to his wife. Minnie feeds her baby in the same spirit that one would feed a pet dog. No reference is ever made to the child's gender. Minnie undresses the baby at the end of the day and puts "it" to bed. The child, like Minnie, is completely sexless. The backbreaking drudgery which Minnie must complete in order to survive in the city seems to have stripped her of her identity.
and even her sexuality. She is a worker— that is all.

Ironically, Minnie recalls the "working girl" heroines so popular at the turn of the century. However, she is not beseiged by a glamorous assortment of roués, nor is she a blushing virgin. In her cheerless, mindless industry, Minnie is a painfully real antidote to the romanticized visions of labor in a great American city.

Dreiser's portrayal of Minnie is inextricably connected with his portrait of the "mysterious" city:

Stirring vague emotions of wonder, hope, and fear, betraying and perpetually changing, the city was above all—in one of Dreiser's favorite images—an Arabian Nights enchantment, illusory and ultimately deceptive. In their inarticulate ineptitude in the face of the metropolis his characters render the tragedy—but also the romance—of the city, for whose immensity and impenetrability they can find no words. 26

Minnie is certainly one of the city's tragedies. She is portrayed as a creature of habit, and one almost believes that she had no choice whatsoever as far as her situation is concerned. We see her only in a series of vignettes, but they all make the same point. There is a relentless constancy which governs her life. Indeed, one senses that were one to return to Minnie's flat ten years after Carrie's arrival, there would still be an infant to placate, Sven's breakfast to serve, and the same grimy floors to scrub.

'What time do you get up to get breakfast?' asked Carrie.

'About twenty minutes of five.'
Together they finished the labor of the day, Carrie washing the dishes while Minnie undressed the baby and put it to bed. Minnie's manner was one of trained industry, and Carrie could see that it was a steady round of toil with her. (Sister Carrie, p. 10)
The narrator says that Minnie is not at all hard and cold by nature. Rather, he says, her mind "... invariably adjusted itself without much complaining, to such surroundings as its industry could make for it."

(Sister Carrie, p. 24) Unfortunately, Minnie is the rule rather than the exception. The city is glamorous and romantic only for a chosen few. For women like Minnie, life holds only the promise of inexorable drudgery.

Carrie is understandably dismayed and repulsed. She realizes that if she remains in this situation, her mind, like Minnie's, will adjust itself to its dismal surroundings. Minnie fills Carrie not only with despair, but also with fearful apprehension. A life spent with Minnie and Sven is certainly not the life Carrie had envisioned for herself. Almost immediately, Carrie realizes that life with Minnie offers no relief from a "steady round of toil." Entertainment is absolutely out of the question, and it is regarded with a suspicious and disapproving eye. Carrie realizes that her role in the Hanson household will strictly prohibit any diversion from the drudgery of continuous toil:

She read from the manner of Hanson, in the subdued air of Minnie, and, indeed the whole atmosphere of the flat, a settled opposition to anything save a conservative round of toil. If Hanson sat every evening in the front room and read his paper, if he went to bed at nine, and Minnie a little later, what would they expect of her? (Sister Carrie, p. 10)

The irony of the situation lies in the fact that although Carrie is faced daily with the reality of Minnie's world, she is unable to perceive that the same city which, to her,
promises ultimate fulfillment has utterly defeated her sister. The romance versus realism dichotomy becomes apparent in the relationship between the two sisters. While Carrie blindly continues to believe in the universal romance of the city, her sister personifies the brutal reality which becomes the fate of the majority. To Carrie, the city is still a place of wonder and fascination, and her longing for material wealth and pleasure overpowers her already feeble sense of duty to Minnie and Sven. In a fascinating treatment of the theatrical aspects of *Sister Carrie*, Ellen Moers insists that Carrie has one consuming passion which is her "... romance with the city, to which she loses heart, head, and body." When Drouet (the "masher" Carrie meets on the train to Chicago) offers her a means of escaping her miserable situation, she accepts, with only the briefest moment of misgiving. Larzer Ziff describes Carrie's alternatives most succinctly:

... Carrie has a reasonable choice to make between continuing her career as a commodity on the unskilled labor market in Chicago and tramping the windswept streets, a virgin with cheap boots through which the snow penetrates, or submitting to Drouet's desires and becoming a commodity of somewhat higher price, whose virginity is lost but whose clothes are weatherproof.28

Carrie turns her back on Minnie and her world because she cannot bear the thought of becoming like her dreary sister. Thus, her primary motivation is defined. Carrie's "... craving for pleasure was so strong that it was the one stay of her nature. She would speak for that when silent on all else."

(*Sister Carrie*, p. 24)
Carrie's relationship with Minnie is significant because Minnie herself is testimony to the brutalizing potential of the city. The relationship also provides the context within which Carrie's desires become crystallized. Through Minnie, we become aware of the fate which Carrie repudiates. Minnie's empty existence is profoundly threatening to Carrie, for, ultimately, it will force her to compromise her romantic illusions. We realize, as Carrie does, that she must either refuse to follow the example set by Minnie or be stifled in obscure drudgery.

After Carrie rejects Minnie and the world she represents, she moves in with Drouet and becomes acquainted with Mrs. Frank Hale. Mrs. Hale and her husband occupy the rooms directly above Carrie and Drouet. Mr. Hale is the manager of a Chicago theater, and we are told that he receives a respectable salary. Unlike Minnie, Mrs. Hale is "... quite attractive, affected the feeling of youth, and objected to that sort of home life which means the care of a house and the raising of a family." (Sister Carrie, p. 77) Mrs. Hale and Carrie become friends, and they spend a good deal of time together. Carrie's relationship with Mrs. Hale is significant for several reasons. She is the first woman who befriends Carrie in Chicago, and their relationship provides Carrie with the reference point from which she views herself in relation to her new environment:

Not long after she [Carrie] arrived Mrs. Hale established social relations with her, and together they went about. For a long time this was her only
companionship, and the gossip of the manager's wife formed the medium through which she saw the world (Sister Carrie, p. 77)

The two women often spend long afternoons driving about the city, torturing themselves with visions of the wealth they know they will never possess. Yet, Carrie and Mrs. Hale react differently to these afternoon outings. Mrs. Hale's enjoyment is of a strictly passive nature. She derives enormous pleasure from merely observing and taking mental note of those things which are impossible for her to obtain:

Mrs. Hale loved to drive in the afternoon in the sun when it was fine, and to satisfy her soul with a sight of those mansions and lawns which she could not afford . . . 'If we could have such a home as that,' said Mrs. Hale sadly, 'how delightful it would be.' (Sister Carrie, p. 86)

For Mrs. Hale, this self-tantalization is an end in itself. The source of her pleasure lies solely in her rather masochistic assessment of her own situation, and she delights in comparing her own lifestyle with those of the wealthy. It is easy to assume that once Mrs. Hale reaches her own home, she quickly forgets (until the next time) the visions which inspired such longing.

Carrie, however, is filled with yearnings of a different nature. She is certain that those mansions represent absolute happiness.

She was perfectly certain that here was happiness. If she could but stroll up yon broad walk, cross that rich entrance-way, which to her was of the beauty of a jewel, and sweep in grace and luxury
to possession and command—oh! how quickly would sadness flee; how, in an instant, would the heartache end. (Sister Carrie, p. 86)

Carrie's outing with Mrs. Hale serves only to intensify her dissatisfaction. While Mrs. Hale is somehow gratified only by the sight of the unattainable, Carrie is moved to a melancholy which pervades every facet of her life:

When she came to her own rooms, Carrie saw their comparative insignificance. She was not so dull but that she could perceive they were but three small rooms in a moderately well furnished boarding-house. She was not contrasting it now with what she had had, but what she had so recently seen. The glow of the palatial doors was still in her eye, the roll of cushioned carriages still in her ears. What, after all was Drouet? What was she? ... She was too wrought up to care to go down to eat, too pensive to do aught but rock and sing. Some old tunes crept to her lips, and, as she sang them, her heart sank. She longed and longed and longed. (Sister Carrie, p. 87)

And so Carrie returns to her rocking chair, that ever-present symbol of motion without progress. She broods and rocks and becomes increasingly unhappy. Her relationship with Mrs. Hale has illuminated, for the first time in the novel, yet another aspect of her character. For Carrie, happiness will always lie just beyond her immediate realm of experience. Fulfillment will always be imagined in the things she does not possess.

At this point in the novel, George Hurstwood, impressive man-about-town, becomes infatuated with Carrie. He is the manager of Fitzgerald and Moy's, a local saloon. Hurstwood, dissatisfied with his shrewish wife and grasping children, is entranced by Carrie's beauty and youthfulness.
Although Carrie never actually meets Hurstwood's wife and daughter, it is impossible to omit them in a discussion of her character, for they foreshadow and undercut Carrie's dream of wealth and happiness:

Jessica . . . was in the high school, and had notions of life which were decidedly those of a patrician. She liked nice clothes and urged for them constantly. Thoughts of love and elegant individual establishments were running in her head. . . . Mrs. Hurstwood was the type of the woman who has endeavored to shine and has been more or less chagrined at the evidences of superior capability in this direction elsewhere. Her knowledge of life extended to that little conventional round of society of which she was not—but longed to be— a member. . . . For her daughter, she hoped better things. Through Jessica she might rise a little. Through George she might draw to herself the privilege of pointing proudly. (Sister Carrie, pp. 63-64)

Mrs. Hurstwood and Jessica provide us with a view of life inside the mansions Carrie so longingly contemplates. Their home is physically beautiful: "There was fine furniture, . . . soft rugs, rich upholstered chairs and divans, a grand piano . . . and a number of small bronzes . . . ." (Sister Carrie, p. 63) Despite the comfortable furnishings of their home, however, the Hurstwoods are a family in name only. George feels little affection for his shrewish wife, and although he was at one time "enamoured of" his daughter, her constant demands for money and clothing have virtually extinguished his paternal instincts.

Mrs. Hurstwood and Jessica embody those desires which exist within Carrie in an intensified form.
brow-beating her husband into submission. Yet, she is not and never will be satisfied:

'George,' said Mrs. Hurstwood, in that tone of voice which had long since come to be associated in his mind with demands, 'we want you to get us a season ticket to the races.'

'Do you want to go to all of them?' he said with a rising inflection.

'Yes,' she answered . . .

'You talk easy,' he said. 'A season family costs one hundred and fifty dollars.'

'I'll not argue with you,' she replied with determination. 'I want the ticket and that's all there is to it.' (Sister Carrie, p. 104-105)

The season tickets, however, are merely a passing fancy, and it is this attitude which characterizes the Hurstwood women's desire for pleasure. Once the desired object is attained, it no longer holds the promise of gratification. Rather, it appears bothersome and tedious, and ultimately, it is discarded in favor of the next whim. Mrs. Hurstwood and Jessica soon tire of going to the races every day. When they notice that prominent members of society are vacationing in Waukesha, they abandon the races completely:

She [Mrs. Hurstwood] had come down to the breakfast table feeling a little out of sorts with herself and revolving a scheme which she had in her mind. Jessica had called her attention to the fact that the races were not what they were supposed to be. The social opportunities were not what they had thought they would be this year. The beautiful girl found going every day a dull thing. There was an earlier exodus this year of people who were anybody to the watering places and Europe. In her own circle of acquaintances several young men in which she was interested had gone to Waukesha. She began to feel that she would like to go too, and her mother agreed with her (Sister Carrie, p. 143)
Like Carrie, the Hurstwood women exist in a state of perpetual discontent, continually seeking pleasure in the things they do not possess. Carrie believes that absolute happiness is to be found in the world occupied by the Hurstwoods, but the dissatisfaction which plagues the Hurstwood women looms threateningly in Carrie's future.

Yet this longing, the "curious stinging sense of what it was to want and not to have" is not unique to Carrie and the Hurstwood women. Rather, it is perpetuated by the culture. America in the late nineteenth century was reaching the height of industrialism, and society depended (and still does) on the creation of wants and needs that could never be satisfied. Only a chosen few, men such as Cornelius Vanderbilt and Andrew Carnegie, were destined for success. For Dreiser, the American city " . . . smiled on the strong or the lucky [and] was pitiless to those who failed."

The Hurstwood women are significant because it is through them that we are able to foresee the end of Carrie's longings. She assumes that happiness automatically accompanies wealth, yet at the end of the novel we find her rich but manifestly unhappy. It is intensely ironic, then, that Carrie is chosen to portray the fictional Laura Courtland, a dramatic heroine who remains happy regardless of her financial situation.

Soon after Carrie moves in with Drouet, he persuades
her to play the part of Laura. When Carrie assumes this role, the discrepancies between what is real and what Carrie, Drouet and Hurstwood believe is real serve to define Carrie.

Under the Gaslight is a melodrama in which the heroine, Laura Courtland, is abducted at birth by a Fagin-like woman named Judas and raised in the ways of crime. Judas substitutes her own child (Pearl) for Laura. While attending the opera one evening, Mrs. Courtland discovers a ragged-looking child attempting to pick her pocket. Kindly Mrs. Courtland vows to protect the child and brings her home to the Courtland mansion. Of course, the child is Laura. Mrs. Courtland, quite by coincidence, has adopted her own child. One thing leads to another, Laura's background is discovered, she is declared society's outcast, and she flees in disgrace. Her fiancé, who cannot bear the thought of marrying Laura now, becomes engaged to Pearl. Kidnappings and drownings abound, and at one point, one of the characters is tied to railroad tracks. Eventually, the mistake is discovered, Laura is restored to society, Pearl's secret is never revealed, and the vacillating fiancé declares his steadfast love for the heroine.

Laura Courtland is a character of moral purity and incredible virtue. Her character is defined even before she walks onto the stage:

Ray: Where is she [Laura]?
Pearl: I sent for her as soon as I saw you coming.
She has hardly been down here [with New Year's eve guests] a moment all evening.

Ray: You forget that your mother died only last summer.

Pearl: No, I don't forget. Pshaw! You're just like Laura. She's only my cousin and yet she keeps always saying--'Poor Aunt Mary! Let us not forget how she would have sorrowed for us.'

Laura is a selfless woman, never losing sight of the fact that if Pearl's mother were alive, she would sorrow for the two girls. The ironies here are manifold. Laura represents everything Carrie wishes herself to be. Through Laura, Carrie is able to claim the role of martyr for herself and she believes that she is the very essence of noble suffering. It is difficult enough to think of Carrie as utterly selfless, but it is virtually impossible to imagine her practicing any form of deliberate self-denial. She has purposely rejected Minnie and all that she represents. She has accepted gifts of money and clothing from Drouet, and she has allowed him to share her home and her bed.

Carrie Meeber and Laura Courtland are worlds apart.

The irony inherent in Carrie's portrayal of Laura lies in the fact that Laura's perspective on life applies directly to Carrie:

Laura: Poor Pearl. It is a sad thing to want for happiness but it is a terrible thing to see another groping about blindly for it when it is almost within the grasp. (Under the Gaslight, p. 35)

Could anything be more obvious? Although Carrie speaks these lines with "natural pathos" (Sister Carrie, p. 137),
the fact remains that she applies absolutely none of Laura's wisdom to herself. She is completely unable to see the relation the drama bears to her own life. If anyone is "groping about blindly for [happiness]," it is certainly Carrie. The remainder of Laura's speech is equally significant when applied to Carrie:

... How happy I feel to be alone with these friends... with no longings for what I may not have--my existence hidden from all save two in the wide world. (Under the Gaslight, p. 30)

Carrie never ceases to long for what she "may not have." It is also impossible to imagine that she could ever be happy with only the company of two friends. She is never happy with people; she is only happy with things.

Perhaps the most intense irony of all occurs when Carrie, as Laura, offers her insights on love:

Let the woman you look upon be wise or vain, beautiful or homely, rich or poor, she has but one thing she can really give or refuse--her heart! Her beauty, her wit, her accomplishments, she may sell you--but her love is the treasure without money and without price. (Under the Gaslight, p. 37)

Laura has given her heart to Ray, but Carrie gives her heart to no one. She recites her lines with emotion and tenderness, but they are meaningless when applied to her own life.

As Carrie delivers her lines, however, both Drouet and Hurstwood (who are watching the play from box seats) become impassioned, and each man silently vows to possess her completely. Drouet and Hurstwood have unconsciously
attributed Laura's qualities to Carrie. They are in love
with the character she plays (if they are in love at all):

Hurstwood resolved a thousand things, Drouet
as well. They joined equally in the burst of applause
which called Carrie out. Drouet pounded his hands
until they ached. . . . He [Hurstwood] could have
leaped out of the box to enfold her. He forgot the
need of circumspectness which his married state en­
forced. . . . By the Lord, he would have that lovely
girl if it took his all. . . . This should be the
end of Drouet and don't you forget it. . . . The
drummer should not have her. (Sister Carrie, p. 140)

The ironies which exist in Carrie's portrayal of Laura
Courtland are endless. The contrast, however, serves to
clarify the nature of Carrie's character. Carrie is a
consummate actress and she only plays at reality.

The relationship between the theater and the characters
of Sister Carrie, between illusion and reality, is a dominant
theme in Sister Carrie. The image of the theater is established
almost immediately in the novel. Drouet tells Carrie that
she reminds him of "some popular actress" (Sister Carrie, p. 5)
and goes on to enumerate the attractions of the city. Theaters,
of course, are at the top of the list. Theatrical imagery
is maintained throughout the novel, and events are often
described in theatrical terms: "Dreiser's device for telling
without showing Carrie's fall is a dream dreamt by Minnie
Hanson, told in theatrical language: 'strange scenes' played
out against 'mystic scenery' moved about by 'many shifts of
the tired brain.'" Many of the characters are involved
to some degree in theatrical artifice. Both Mr. Hale and
Hurstwood are managers of establishments which specialize
in pleasure and illusion: Mr. Hale manages a theater, Hurstwood, a saloon. Perhaps the most striking use of theater imagery involves Hurstwood. Ellen Moers believes that Hurstwood evokes a more sinister type of theatrical illusion. Indeed, she maintains that Hurstwood makes Carrie and Drouet appear naive. Hurstwood is preoccupied with

... ideas of game-playing and deception, play acting and hypocrisy. ... Under the surface dignity there is the hired toady; under the show of leisurely lounging, the hustling manager; under the apparent friendship with men of power, there is no real power and there are no real friends. Hurstwood's progress in the novel is from sham celebrity to fatal anonymity. 

Hurstwood does indeed play elaborate games, and one of the most interesting of these occurs when he meets Carrie for the first time. The scene is carefully contrived, and Hurstwood is like an actor who merely plays a part:

He did not look at her often. When he did it was with a mild light in his eye. Not a shade was there of anything save geniality and kindness. He took back the shifty, clever gleam and replaced it with one of innocence. (Sister Carrie, p. 74).

Just as an actor calculates the potential effect of a particular facial expression, so does Hurstwood calculate the effect of his appearance on Carrie. As he plots to possess Carrie, he is like a bloated spider greedily contemplating the prospect of its next meal.

Events in the novel occur rapidly after Carrie's appearance in Under the Gaslight. Hurstwood becomes convinced (after his wife locks him out of his house) that he cannot live without Carrie. After drinking too much one
night, he steals ten thousand dollars from his employers. Telling Carrie that Drouet lies injured in a hospital just outside of town, he lures her onto a train bound for Detroit. Carrie offers a few feeble protests and then settles back to dream about the life which awaits her.

As Carrie looked out upon the flying scenery she almost forgot that she had been tricked into this long journey against her will and that she was without the necessary apparel for travelling. She quite forgot Hurstwood's presence at times, and looked away to homely farmhouses and cozy cottages in villages with wondering eyes. It was an interesting world to her. Her life had just begun. She did not feel herself defeated at all. Neither was she blasted in hope.

The great city held much. Possibly she would come out of bondage into freedom— who knows? Perhaps she would be happy. (Sister Carrie, pp. 203-204)

Carrie has been virtually kidnapped, she is on a train bound for a distant city and she is actually able to think about the fact that she has not brought proper travelling attire. One can almost imagine her anguished cry: "What am I going to wear?" instead of "Let me off this train at once!" Carrie is obsessed with exteriors and appearances, and this obsession determines the course of her relationship with Mrs. Vance, a New York socialite. Almost as soon as Carrie and Hurstwood settle in New York, Carrie begins to compare her situation with Mrs. Vance's, and the cycle of dissatisfaction begins anew.

She [Carrie] also saw that she was not well dressed— not nearly as well dressed— as Mrs. Vance. Her situation was cleared up for her. She felt that her life was becoming stale, and therein she felt cause for gloom. The old helpful, urging melancholy was restored. The desirous Carrie was whispered to concerning her possibilities. (Sister Carrie, p. 225)

Carrie is unable to enjoy the company of Mrs. Vance.

She notices every detail of Mrs. Vance's dress, and compares
each nuance of fashion with her own costume. Carrie cannot
abide the thought that her own beauty may be surpassed by
her friend's.

The latter [Mrs. Vance] departed, and at one o'clock
reappeared, stunningly arrayed in a dark blue walking
dress, with a nobby hat to match. Carrie had gotten
herself up charmingly enough, but this woman pained
her by contrast. She seemed to have so many dainty
little things which Carrie had not. . . . Carrie felt
that she needed more and better clothes to compare with
this woman, and that any one looking at the two would
pick Mrs. Vance for her raiment alone. . . . It served . . . to augment Carrie's dissatisfaction with her
state. (Sister Carrie, p. 226)

Carrie's pride becomes so wounded by her unrelenting
comparisons that she resolves not to walk through the
fashionable sections of New York until she "look[s] better":

The whole street bore the flavor of riches and
show, and Carrie felt that she was not of it. She
could not, for the life of her, assume the attitude and
smartness of Mrs. Vance, who, in her beauty was all
assurance. She would only imagine that it must be evi
dent to many that she was the less handsomely dressed
of the two. At the same time she longed to feel the
delight of parading here as an equal. Ah, then she
would be happy. (Sister Carrie, p. 227)

Although the suggestion may seem ludicrous, Mrs. Vance
and Carrie's sister Minnie have much in common. Like Minnie,
Mrs. Vance moves frenetically through her own existence, but
it is motion without destination. She does not rise or fall,
but like Minnie, she exists on a "steady round" of mindless
action. Carrie, as usual, is so blinded by Mrs. Vance's wealth
and social stature that she is unable to see the correlation
which exists between her friend and her sister. Once
again, Carrie retreats to her rocking chair, withdraws from
reality, and dreams of the happiness which continues to elude her:

That night the pretty little flat seemed a commonplace thing. It was not what the rest of the world was enjoying. She saw the servant working at dinner with an indifferent eye. In her mind were running scenes of play. [She has just attended the theater with Mrs. Vance.] Particularly she remembered one beautiful actress—the sweetheart who had been wooed and won. . . . Her dresses had been all that art could suggest, her sufferings had been so real. The anguish which she had portrayed Carrie could feel . . . . Oh, if she could only have such a part, how broad would be her life. . . . When Hurstwood came, Carrie was . . . sitting, rocking and thinking, and did not care to have her enticing imaginations broken in upon; so she said little or nothing. (Sister Carrie, p. 229) 35

By the time Carrie meets Lola Osborne (the "little blue eyed soldier"), she has become disgusted with Hurstwood's slovenly appearance and his feeble attempts at finding work. She takes a job as a chorus girl, is befriended by Lola, and during the course of this friendship, leaves Hurstwood. Lola is Carrie's last significant female acquaintance in the novel.

Lola Osborne is a vivacious and likeable character who befriends Carrie because she is not frightened of her. The glaring differences which exist between the two women serve to illuminate Carrie's character. Lola is described as

. . . one of the sweetest and most sympathetic little chorus girls in the company . . . a gay little Manon, unwitting of society's fierce conception of morality, but nevertheless, good to her neighbor and charitable. (Sister Carrie, p. 286)

Two elements of this passage become ironically signifi-
Cant when applied to Carrie. Lola appears to be everything that Carrie is not. Lola may be "unwitting of society's fierce conception of morality," but Carrie cannot claim any such naiveté. Carrie is fully aware of the social value placed on virginity and virtue—she has merely chosen to ignore it. Carrie becomes uncomfortable when she considers "what it is [she has] lost" (*Sister Carrie*, p. 69), and it becomes much easier simply to put it out of her mind.

The passage above also tells us that Lola is "good to her neighbor and charitable." Carrie, however, is charitable only when she stands to gain something. When she is forced to sacrifice a portion of her earnings to help with the upkeep of the flat she shares with Hurstwood, she rebels with every fiber of her being. She deserts Hurstwood, leaving behind a cruel dismissal:

'Dear George,' he [Hurstwood] read, crunching the money in one hand. 'I'm going away. I'm not coming back any more. It's no use trying to keep up the flat; I can't do it. I wouldn't mind helping you, if I could, but I can't support us both, and pay the rent. I need what little I make to pay for my clothes. I'm leaving twenty dollars. It's all I have just now. You can do whatever you like with the furniture. I won't want it.' (*Sister Carrie*, p. 320)

Unlike Lola, Carrie is not kind.

Despite their differences, Carrie and Lola become good friends, and eventually, they agree to share an apartment. Carrie becomes successful in the theater, and Lola succeeds
vicariously through Carrie, celebrating each success as though it were her own:

Carrie's little soldier friend, Miss Osborne, seeing her succeeding, had become a sort of satellite. Little Osborne could never of herself amount to anything. She seemed to realize it... and instinctively continued to cling... to Carrie. (Sister Carrie, p. 315)

Surprisingly enough, Lola is not disturbed by her realization that she will never "amount to anything" and she is content simply to be Carrie's friend. Herein lies the fundamental difference between Carrie and Lola. Lola is perfectly at ease with herself, and despite her frequent flightiness, she exhibits an almost sophisticated degree of self-knowledge. She is out to have a good time, and she admits it. Carrie, on the other hand, yearns for something she is unable to define, and the constant yearning causes constant dissatisfaction. Lola is honestly happy; Carrie is not. Carrie needs Lola, however, for Lola's adoration is absolute:

She [Carrie] almost loved Lola for the sympathy and praise she extended. It was so helpful to her—so almost necessary. (Sister Carrie, p. 323)

It is the first time in the novel that Carrie has "almost loved" anyone. Carrie loves Lola's praise, not Lola herself.

Our last glimpse of Lola and Carrie together occurs as they watch a snowstorm from their comfortable suite at the Waldorf.

'Isn't it bad?' she observed to Lola. 'Terrible!' said that little lady joining her.
'I hope it snows enough to go sleigh riding.'
'Oh, dear,' said Carrie, with whom the sufferings of Father Goriot were still keen. [Carrie has been reading Balzac's *Le Père Goriot. 'That's all you think of. Aren't you sorry for the people who haven't anything tonight?'] (*Sister Carrie*, p. 364)

Carrie exists only in the world of appearances. She feels pity for the unfortunate not because she is compassionate by nature, but because she is impressed with the "sufferings of Father Goriot." For the moment, Carrie projects the sentiment of Balzac's novel. She believes her pity is real, but it is empty and artificial. We feel almost affectionate toward the character of Lola, for unlike the other characters of the novel, she is sincere. Carrie's theatrics are distasteful compared to the reality of the "blue-eyed soldier."

It is certainly no accident that the novel leaves Carrie as she reigns over the stages of New York. Carrie is a consummate actress, nothing more. The very nature of her career indicates that Carrie is unable (and unwilling) to cope with the reality of the world which surrounds her. Minnie and her grim husband Sven offer Carrie none of the excitement she anticipates for herself in Chicago, and there is no respite from the "steady round of toil" which occupies her sister. Carrie leaves Minnie and takes Drouet as a lover, but she remains unhappy. Mrs. Hale offers Carrie a tantalizing vision of the wealth which lies just beyond her reach, and Carrie's longing becomes even more bitter. Carrie leaves Drouet for Hurstwood because he "... stands at a higher level than Drouet, closer to some center of power, wealth and joy that ... Carrie
cannot actually conceive but merely senses." In New York, Carrie meets Mrs. Vance, who possesses all the little material treasures for which Carrie so ardently longs. She leaves Hurstwood and becomes a hit on Broadway. There she meets Lola Osborne, who may not possess much, but who tells Carrie everything she wants to hear.

Carrie constantly moves away from the things which dissatisfy her, yet she is not sure of what she is moving toward. She is frightened, because the oppressive reality which surrounds her threatens constantly to shatter her illusions. Carrie knows what it feels like to be nothing, and she recoils from it with every fiber of her being. She runs from illusion to illusion, always seeking but never finding the happiness which she believes is just beyond her grasp.

Carrie deals with the discrepancies between her dreams and reality by retreating to the world of the theater. Initially, it provides merely a welcome diversion from the drudgery of her life with Hurstwood. Gradually, however, it comes to mean more than this. The theater substantiates and embellishes her own illusions and ultimately it becomes her reality. It is only by immersing herself in the artifice and deception of the stage that Carrie approaches (but never reaches) fulfillment.

The first evidence of Carrie's affinity with the theater is, of course, her portrayal of Laura Courtland
Laura Courtland embodies everything Carrie wishes herself to be, and ultimately, Carrie begins to believe that she possesses characteristics identical to Laura's. From the beginning of the novel, the theater provides Carrie with a reality with which she can cope and which places her at its center. It is while Carrie lives with Hurstwood, however, that the theater begins to occupy a prominent position in her life. Her dissatisfaction is aggravated daily by the sight of Hurstwood, and her aversion to him becomes almost cruel. Hurstwood and everything that is associated with him are, to Carrie, unwelcome intrusions which are not to be tolerated:

So changed was her state that the home atmosphere became intolerable. It was all poverty and trouble there, or seemed to be because it was a load to bear. It became a place to keep away from. (Sister Carrie, p. 295)

Carrie soothes her conscience by keeping the flat tidy, but in essence she gives Hurstwood nothing: no encouragement, no assistance, and certainly, no love. Carrie's relationship with Hurstwood is reminiscent of Minnie's relationship with Sven as well as Mrs. Hurstwood's relationship with her (ex) husband. Minnie's whole life revolves around keeping the baby fed and the flat clean. Her relationship with Sven seems completely without tenderness. They merely exist together. Mrs. Hurstwood has several servants to take care of household chores, yet she uses her leisure time to nag
her husband. She gives him no moral support whatsoever. In order to escape Hurstwood's annoying intrusions, Carrie immerses herself in the artificiality of the theater world. As she becomes more involved with her stage life, her contempt for Hurstwood becomes more intense. She begins to resent Hurstwood's pathetic requests for money, and she becomes cruel in her denials. As she cruelly refuses to aid Hurstwood, her tone of voice, her word choice, and her obstinate refusal to budge become remarkably like Mrs. Hurstwood's. As we approach the end of the novel, a streak of cruel selfishness becomes apparent in Carrie's character:

'I'll not do it,' she said, 'after I get started. He can take his meals out.' (Sister Carrie, p. 282)

'I'll not give him the rest of my money,' said Carrie. 'I do enough. I am going to get me something to wear.' (Sister Carrie, p. 290)

'Oh, yes,' answered Carrie. 'That's always the way. It takes more than I earn to pay for things. I don't see what I'm going to do.'

'Well, I've tried to get something,' he [Hurstwood] exclaimed. 'What do you want me to do?' 'You couldn't have tried so very hard,' said Carrie. 'I got something.' (Sister Carrie, p. 291)

Carrie eventually leaves Hurstwood for the glittering world of the theater. Carrie believes that here she will find the fulfillment she has sought for so long. She repudiates Hurstwood's world, and the stage becomes her reality:

She saw a large, empty, shadowy play-house, still redolent of the perfumes and blazonry of the night, and notable for its rich, oriental appearance. The wonder of it awed and delighted her. Blessed be its wondrous reality. It was above the common mass, above idleness, above want, above insignificance. (Sister Carrie, p. 280)
While Carrie is briefly satisfied, she begins to feel the old longings stirring in her heart, and once again, she begins the cycle of dissatisfaction. When she observes that the leading actors and actresses receive more attention and more pay, she wishes to become a leading actress herself. When she does eventually become the best-known actress in New York, she is momentarily thrilled when she learns she will earn $150 a week. Yet, she becomes despondent when she realizes that she cannot do much with her new salary—she must have still more. At the end of the novel, we find Carrie where she has always been, in the rocking chair which symbolizes her aimless motion. There is no growth of character, no improvement of mind. Instead, Carrie has begun to bear an uncanny resemblance to both Minnie and Mrs. Hurstwood. Like Minnie, she is caught up in a "steady round" of meaningless activity. Like Mrs. Hurstwood, she is cruel and selfish. Carrie has indeed progressed, and her metamorphosis from naive country girl to calculating actress is disturbing and distasteful. At the end of the novel, Carrie is an actress of supreme capability. She wears emotion as a mask, and there is nothing underneath. Carrie is motivated by an all-consuming desire for material wealth. She believes that all happiness lies in possession. At the end of the novel, she is successful, but she has failed to gain the fulfillment she pursued so passionately. She has every material comfort imaginable, yet there is an overwhelming emptiness in her life.
Carrie has devoted her entire being to the pursuit of illusions, and while she has attained these illusions, she has discovered that they are absolutely without content. Carrie's story is a type of American tragedy, for she embodies the failure which is often attendant upon success.

Because Carrie's success contains such an overwhelming degree of failure, she embodies the conflicting forces and dreams which operate in her society. On one hand, Carrie sees herself as a sentimental heroine, happy regardless of her financial status. Laura Courtland personifies those characteristics which Carrie begins to believe are her own: unqualified generosity, pity for the unfortunate, and purity of heart. Carrie only achieves the appearance of these qualities, for she is, ultimately, only an actress. On the other hand, Carrie is driven by her passionate desire for the trappings of wealth. She is never content with what she has and always believes that absolute happiness lies just beyond her reach. At the end of the novel, she possesses material wealth, but it is empty, for she finds no happiness in her possessions. Obviously, Carrie cannot exist simultaneously in the world of sentiment and the world of riches, for there is no such thing as a cruel and grasping sentimental heroine. Carrie embodies the impossibility and the emptiness of the American dream.

Several critics have commented on the similarities between Dreiser and his heroine. Dreiser, like Carrie,
passionately longed to be rich. While he eventually did achieve a degree of wealth, he was unhappy and neurotic throughout much of his life. In his portrayal of Carrie, as well as his frequent identification with her, Theodore Dreiser has created a novel whose theme is universal. If Carrie is an illustration of Dreiser's own longings, then certainly she comes to represent all of us. Carrie's life testifies to the fact that man's insatiable dreams are, ultimately, empty.
The publication history of *Sister Carrie* is probably one of the most interesting, if not significant, literary events of the early twentieth century. Dreiser offered the novel to Doubleday, Page and Company after it was rejected by Harper's. Frank Norris, author of *McTeague*, was a reader at this time for Doubleday, Page. Upon reading *Sister Carrie*, Norris became very enthusiastic and urged its immediate publication. Walter Hines Page and Henry Lanier, the two junior partners of the publishing firm, were not quite as enthusiastic as Norris, but they agreed to sign a contract with Dreiser. Unfortunately for Dreiser, however, Frank Doubleday was in Europe at this time and in his absence, the publishing firm signed a binding contract with Dreiser which stated that Doubleday, Page would publish 1000 copies of the novel in the fall of 1900. When Doubleday returned from Europe, he and his wife read the novel and despised it. Doubleday attempted to renege on the contract, and when Dreiser insisted on his rights, Doubleday agreed to publish, but not to advertise the book. About 465 books were sold and 129 were sent out for review. After five years, 414 copies were left unsold. The book was re-issued in 1907. For a more detailed account of *Sister Carrie*’s publishing history, see W.A. Swanberg, *Dreiser* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965) and Robert H. Elias, *Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).


3 Salzman, p. 3.


12 Berthoff, p. 4.

13 Berthoff, p. 4.


15 Ziff, p. 249.

16 Ziff, p. 335.

17 Dreiser, A Book About Myself, pp. 322-323.


19 Salzman, p. 5.

20 Ziff, p. 335.
W.A. Swanberg recounts the following anecdote: Perhaps no one of the stature less than William Dean Howells could have saved Carrie by resolute championing. But the aging Howells, who had fought his own battle for realism decades earlier and won it, demurred at this newer brand of realism. Dreiser, who had once interviewed Howells for a magazine article met him one day at the Harper's Monthly office. Howells said coldly, 'You know, I don't like Sister Carrie,' and hurried on.

Swanberg, p. 92.

Moers, p. 102.

Moers, pp. 102-103.

Swanberg notes that one of Dreiser's own habits was rocking for hours at a time. "... he developed a habit of pleating his handkerchief carefully, then folding it into a cube, finally flinging it out like a flag and starting the folding process all over again. ..." Swanberg, p. 78.


See Swanberg, Moers, and Elias.
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**Articles**


VITA

Mary Jackson Lutz