Crossing cultures with Carrie Meeber and Theodore Dreiser

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Crossing cultures
with Carrie Meeber and Theodore Dreiser

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Literature)
Major Professor: Mary Helen Dunlop

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1997
This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Irina Bassis

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Major Professor

For the Major Program

For the Graduate College
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When I was growing up in the former Soviet Union, reading foreign literature meant many wonderful things. First, it was an ability to escape the reality of my own country, which at that point in time I did not consider repressive or limiting. On the contrary, my country was the best in the world and my classmates and I felt particularly sorry for the growing generation of young Americans who (as we were perpetually reminded on TV and in newspapers) were constantly threatened by ever-rising crime in their country and gloomy prospects for their future. But the reality escape was necessary not only to confirm my own beliefs in the superiority of my country but also to allow me experience the outer world far beyond the limits of my big country. For this, nothing was better than a nice book and the helping hand of the author who would introduce me to foreign wonders.

Second, without the distinct awareness of the restrictive powers of the Soviet system, and its hypnotic social conditioning, I kept thinking time and again that though (for some inexplicable reason) I could not travel, my books could take me wherever I want to go. Reading American books was like munching on forbidden fruit: I always knew that it was not entirely "healthy" but I wanted to try it.

In school we were taught that there were "good" and "bad" foreign authors. The distinction (the borderline) was defined by the perception those authors had of the Soviet Union. If they liked the country and wrote favorable comments (or at least did not express their dissatisfaction openly), they were "good." Anything to the contrary was "bad." Mark Twain was good (and dead long ago, which was kind of good also). Sherwood Anderson was good.
Theodore Dreiser was good. Ernest Hemingway was not really "good" for some time, but later he understood his mistakes, and became "good."

This is not to say that other American authors were unknown or completely "forbidden." Those who were approved on the Soviet censor list were widely translated, openly discussed, often admired, and quite frequently blamed for their political or philosophical views. The country would "adopt" this or that writer and be especially attentive to his/her career, his/her life-style, and achievements. For example, when Hemingway died, the whole country declared official mourning for the loss of the great writer.

The counter-effect of such "adoption" policy was that the writer and his work would be relentlessly "pushed" by such social institutions as educational establishments, various Houses of Friendship among peoples, clubs, mass media, etc. Sherwood Anderson, for instance, was so relentlessly promoted and praised that I developed an antagonistic reaction to him without ever reading his books. I spent five years at the University studying English literature and successfully dodged reading Winesburg, Ohio. (Only many years later did I discover the beauty of the book.)

Dreiser's name was a staple on the Soviet critic's menu list. Everybody knew that the great writer fought the evils of capitalist society and believed in the inevitable advantages of socialism. Besides, his novels (Sister Carrie for one) had an aura of impermissible behavior, especially felt by teenage girls. I remember I was in the fifth grade when my mother told me that Sister Carrie was not a "proper" book to read at my age. Of course, that was the biggest encouragement to read it, and I traded my copy of Jane Eyre for a copy of Dreiser's first novel. Little did I know back then that many years later the author and the translation of the novel into Russian would become the object of my study.
I have to admit that the forceful policy of adoption of foreign writers had its positive results. The general not-very-much-reading public knew those writers, could often name the leading characters of their books, and identify the country of the author's origin. I do not know whether such policy stipulates the reading or promotes interesting discussions, but I am aware of the peer pressure it emanates for those who lack the necessary knowledge.

In graduate school in this country I heard from my fellow-students that they successfully dodged Dreiser in their studies of American literature, explaining it by the presumed unappealing quality of his writing, his "outdated" outlook, and his uninteresting plots. To me it sounded like studying Russian literature without Dostoevski or Tolstoy: it would have been impossible back home. In fact, it would have been impossible to study any foreign literature and avoid Dreiser--such is his powerful position in the canon.

This country does not know its writers not only because graduate students refuse to study them, although they are partially responsible. The general uninterested attitude "encourages" passive reception of cultural values and beliefs, and that is why I have not infrequently heard in America the question: Dreiser? What a strange sounding name ... Is he foreign?
CHAPTER 1
REPRESENTATIONS OF THEODORE DREISER AND SISTER CARRIE
IN INTRODUCTIONS TO THE TEXT

Theodore Dreiser's place in the American canon is no longer under dispute: every critic considers him a figure of major importance in American letters. One thing is absolutely clear: at the end of the 20th century Dreiser still inspires arguments, provokes controversial points of view, and ignites disputes concerning not only his characters, but his own creative persona with the same, if not a more acute, passion than burned almost a hundred years ago. In the course of years much was done to study Dreiser's vision of the world, to clarify the choice of characters in his novels, and to determine his own personality and the influences that he might have experienced. Various biographical and critical studies--some short-lived, others blessed with longevity--have explicated and illuminated not only Dreiser's faults, but his evident merits also.

As one makes his/her way through this mass of critical material directly and indirectly dealing with Dreiser, it is impossible to avoid questions of critical reception. Numerous critics concentrate their attention on miscellaneous review-articles which appeared as early as November, 1900 either in popular, or, as in the case with the first publication of Sister Carrie, not so popular newspapers and magazines. Nowhere in all of this research, however, has the role of introductions to Dreiser's books and their role in representing both the author and his work been discussed or even touched upon.

To my mind, this important void needs to be filled for several reasons. First, because any introduction tries to present the book and the author to the reading public, it inevitably assigns them some distinctive qualities. The qualities, usually directly stated, serve as the introducer's reasons for
purchasing and reading the book (though this is implied rather than stated). Second, any introduction provides some preliminary (often generalized) analysis of the book and the author, thus stimulating further thoughts, investigations, and analyses. Third, an introduction frequently appropriates and synthesizes reviews, critical materials, and biographical information that has previously been published, and in this way helps either to create or sustain the (already existing) net of scholarly criticism. Besides the above enumerated reasons, introductions, as a rule, depict changing societal views and attitudes, thus encouraging the dialogue about the role not only of a separately taken author at a given moment, but also about his/her place within the existing canon.

Donald Pizer’s *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide* (1991), provides a comprehensive bibliography of Dreiser’s publications and of writings about him. According to it, among numerous editions of *Sister Carrie* in this country, fourteen carry introductions written by such well-known Dreiser scholars as Maxwell Geismar, Kenneth S. Lynn, Claude Simpson, Burton Rascoe, and Jack Salzman. To give an idea of *Sister Carrie’s* dominance, suffice it to say that "Ten paperback and four clothbound editions of *Sister Carrie* were listed in Books in Print for 1983-84, but there is no edition of either *The “Genius”* or *The Bulwark* currently available in this country" (*Sixteen Modern American Authors*, 127).

The story of the publication of *Sister Carrie* is, as Pizer calls it, an integral part of twentieth-century cultural mythology. The myth was propelled by Dreiser himself in his first interview with the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* on January 26, 1902. Dreiser emphasized four pivotal points: the heroic part played by Frank Norris in the publication of the novel, the role of Mrs. Doubleday in the attempt to "suppress" the book, the benevolent influence of British reviews (following the
1901 Heinemann edition) on American publishers and critical journals, and, finally, the demolishing critical attacks the novel suffered in the United States. Dreiser stated that Norris, as a senior reader for the Doubleday, Page and Co., read the novel, liked it, and passed it over to Mr. Page who "considered it the best book brought into the house that year." While Mr. Doubleday, the senior partner, was in Europe, a contract was signed "by which the work was to be published in the fall." When Mr. Doubleday returned, he took the much-heard-of-manuscript home, where his wife, Mrs. Doubleday, read *Sister Carrie* and "took a violent dislike to it." As the contract had already been drawn, Dreiser firmly stood by it, and the novel was published. *Sister Carrie* was criticized for its immorality and only after the favorable British reviews was the novel recognized for its power, "exact as life itself" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 457).

In a letter to Fremont Older, dated November 27, 1923, Dreiser is more specific about the history of suppression of the novel. Again, his rendering underlines the role of Norris, who "told me [Dreiser] quite enthusiastically that he thought it was a fine book, and that he was satisfied that Doubleday would be glad to publish it" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 459). At the same time, Dreiser stresses the negative role of Mrs. Doubleday, and characterizes her as being of "a conventional and Victorian turn." Describing Mrs. Doubleday's reaction to the novel, the writer uses verbatim the words which he used more than twenty years ago during the newspaper interview, i.e., "she took a violent dislike to the book and proceeded to discourage her husband as to its publication" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 460). According to Dreiser, Doubleday kept his word as to the publication of the novel, but did nothing to advertise it or promote its sales. As a result, "Doubleday stored all of the 1,000 copies printed--minus three hundred distributed by Norris--in the basement of his Union Square plant, and there they
remained, except for a number abstracted, until 1905" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 460).

The best known account of the "suppression" is provided by Dreiser in his Preface to *Sister Carrie* (Modern Library Edition, 1932). Notwithstanding some similarities among different versions of the same myth, the 1932 variant is, seemingly, the one that over the years Dreiser himself grew into believing. Interestingly enough, it contradicts Dreiser's expressed previously statements as to the chronology of the novel's prepublication history and the distribution of published copies. The overall emphasis of this interpretation is noticeably the same: Norris as a noble hero, Mrs. Doubleday as a villain, and the firm as an enterprise deficient in the distribution of the copies of the novel. Dreiser specifies that he began the novel in the autumn of 1899 and finished it in May, 1900. According to other accounts, e.g., the *Post-Dispatch* report, the novel was completed in March. The reader meets another surprise when Dreiser explains Norris's role and states: "He recommended it [the novel] most enthusiastically to his employers, and it seemed that my book was really to be published, for a few weeks later I signed a contract with Doubleday Page and the book was printed" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 464). In the meantime, continues Dreiser, Mrs. Doubleday read the novel and "was horrified by its frankness." Doubleday Page decided not to put it in circulation, but Norris persuaded Dreiser that the book should come before the American public and the latter insisted on the publishers carrying out the contract. Thomas McKee, the legal adviser for the firm (Dreiser claimed that McKee narrated the story to him at a later date), advised the company to proceed with the publication of *Sister Carrie*, and reminded the owners that publication excluded selling: "in short, the books, after publication, might be thrown into the cellar! I [Dreiser] believe this advice was followed to the letter, because no copies were ever sold. But Frank Norris ... did
manage to send out some copies to book reviewers, probably a hundred of them" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 464).

Thus Dreiser established an "official" narration of the suppression of the novel and marked its main characters and events. No doubt the myth (which still causes a difference of opinion among Dreiser scholars) has been modified, corrected and expanded, since Dreiser obviously contradicted his own personal accounts of the story.

Amy Kaplan, in *Social Construction of American Realism*, points out that Dreiser, during the republication of *Sister Carrie* in 1907, turned his past failure into promotional material by working on a big advertising campaign, "which included a long promotional brochure with reviews of the first edition and a story of its 'suppression' on the first page" (137). A new wrinkle in Dreiser's account of the story was that in spite of the favorable reviews the novel "fell flat" because reorders were not filled. According to Richard Lingeman, Dreiser's biographer, the firm of B. W. Dodge chose not to publish the brochure either because of its length, or because of its fear of antagonizing the publisher, Frank Doubleday. (Dreiser, 415)

In this chapter I am going to explore the representations of the novel's publishing and reception history as narrated in various introductions. My primary focus is on the following contested points: the role of Frank Norris and Mrs. Doubleday; *Sister Carrie's* reception and sales; and the novel's meaning as rendered by the writers of its introductions. I will analyze introductions in chronological order of their appearance, from the oldest to the most recent.

The first *Sister Carrie* edition with an introduction was published in 1939; the introduction was written by Burton Rascoe, the critic who in 1925 presented the first individual study of Dreiser in *Theodore Dreiser*. Rascoe's book, dealing with critical and biographical matters, appeared before *An American Tragedy*
was published, which makes his defense of Dreiser "courageous as well as directly on the mark" (Gerber, 121).

Rascoe's (1939) over-enthusiastic and somewhat playful introduction, full of exciting epithets and metaphors, exemplifies one of those pieces in which the author, though full of love for his/her subject, does not care much about facts, and when facts are inaccessible is quite satisfied with a wild flow of imagination.

The story of *Sister Carrie*’s publication has been greatly influenced by Dreiser's personal narration of it, and although retold many times (often with the purpose to clarify and explain), it still bears some residue of the author's vision. Rascoe came up with his own version of the story. According to him (contrary to Dreiser's own reminiscences in a letter to Fremont Older about a young literary friend of his who was convinced that Dreiser could write a novel), it was not Arthur Henry who challenged Dreiser into writing the novel. Quite the opposite: it was Dreiser who "told Henry he would write a novel if Henry would write one" (vi). In Rascoe's eyes most American fiction up until that time was "a bon-bon of lethal sugar for American women," who preferred to read E. P. Roe and Amelia E. Barr. Accepting the challenge, Henry "started batting out a romantic yarn," while Dreiser was standing in admiration, completely sure of his defeat. (vi) Coming down to the last chapter, all of a sudden Henry felt deflated, worn out, and incapable of finishing the novel. That is why in a friendly gesture Dreiser had to finish *A Princess of Arcady*, and only after that was he ready to sit down to writing his own novel. From the first page with the title words on it grew a novel of expansive dimensions, for as Rascoe comments on Dreiser's style, "Dreiser has never had any sense of condensation. He sprawls" (x). Arthur Henry lent a helpful hand in shrinking the book to "reasonable proportions." Dreiser's wife Jug gets no credit for her stylistic and grammatical corrections. In
fact, she is not mentioned in Rascoe's introduction at all, and the entire piece is saturated with derogatory remarks about women, their low mental capacity and ineptness. For instance, "American women ... rocked themselves in rocking chairs and wondered why an evil Fate had not given them the handsome, dashing, reckless husbands (whose hearts, however, were all gold, their morals pure, their love undying)" (vi).

According to Rascoe, after addressing the old and conservative firm of Harper & Bros., which turned down the manuscript, Dreiser took it to Doubleday, Page & Co. There the novel was read by Frank Norris, who became "almost deliriously enthusiastic about Sister Carrie" (x) and infused Frank N. Doubleday, Walter H. Page, and Henry W. Lanier with his enthusiasm. The contract was signed, the book was printed. Rascoe believes that Mrs. Doubleday read it only after the book appeared in print, was horrified by its "immorality," and demanded the withdrawal of the novel, thus simultaneously exposing herself as a pushy wife and a villain. According to the firm's lawyer, the publishing house had fulfilled its obligations with the publication of the book, so the reasonable solution would be to abandon sales and promotion of the novel. Rascoe contends that the book was not suppressed in the "technical" sense, for it was the public --the "mob imbecility"--that was not ready for the book yet. The critic states that Sister Carrie received "overwhelmingly denunciatory" reviews. (xi) (Such a view contributed to the wide-spread legend that publishers and reviewers alike tried to keep Sister Carrie from the American public.)

Rascoe portrays Dreiser as a decisive though timid man, who knew what he had done and was ready to fight for it. Even Dreiser's plagiarism in drawing the character of Drouet is favorably described:
Dreiser levied upon phrases of the idiomatic dialogue of George Ade's *Fables in Slang*. When small-time academic snoopers charged Dreiser with plagiarism the newspapers wired George Ade for a statement about the charge. That wise and gracious gentleman from Indiana wired in reply: 'I am only glad that, if out of some of the bricks I have made, Mr. Dreiser has done me the honor to use one or two to build a literary monument of which we all should be proud.' (viii)

Such innocent understanding of the act was not shared by many of the first newspaper reviewers. The article in *The Interior* on February 21, 1901, while enumerating the flaws of Dreiser's novel, notices:

Sophomorical reflections, statements solemnly made which are egregiously incorrect, confusions of fancy and reality which are the death of art, a characterization which follows almost word for word the work of another man previously published, and similar blunders harass the reader and make him wish that the publishers could have provided an editor for the work who had the one qualification of common sense. (Quoted in Salzman, 1972, 13)

Rascoe "forgets" to mention that in 1907, when Dreiser was preparing to print the Dodge edition, he altered "only a single page in the 1900 edition on which he plagiarized George Ade's portrait of a masher in describing Drouet. No cuts were restored, and even in later reprints of the novel that required resetting the type the 1907 text was perpetuated" (Sloane, 13).

Rascoe's vision of the characters in *Sister Carrie* is worth considering also. He categorically declares that "A girl loses her virginity of mind long before she loses her physical virginity" (viii). Rascoe sees Carrie as a "brainy" girl who needs to survive in a man-made economic world, which creates many Carrie
Meebers in different communities. Though the reader never meets Carrie's parents in the novel, Rascoe is sure that they wanted all the wrong things in life, "and therefore wanted their daughter to be the virgin, blissful bride of some grateful millionaire" (viii). Carrie is not naive, passive, or drifting along. Rascoe sees her as a manipulative creature, who "has the intelligence to play him [Hurstwood] along and use him, materialistically, just as he had used innumerable weaker men--and women" (ix). Carrie ignores the conventional morals of the day which demanded punishment for actions like hers. She is not punished, in fact, Rascoe finds her "going from penury to property, thence to luxury and ... being happy ... in the process" (viii). Rascoe's introduction provides one of the very few instances were Carrie's character is seen as happy but extremely manipulative.

To Rascoe's mind, Hurstwood's decline and following breakdown are caused by his infatuation with Carrie. He is punished for his lecherous act, and, according to the critic, Dreiser narrates Hurstwood's fall so persuasively and with such dramatic conviction that it "yields nothing to Balzac, Dostoevsky or Tolstoy" (ix). It is obvious that Rascoe's reading is filtered through his misogyny. His view implies that most women are dumb, and those few who are not are remarkably manipulative. He reads *Sister Carrie* as a call to arms, a warning to men to be watchful and not let women beguile them into the Hurstwood situation.

In 1949 appeared a second introduction to *Sister Carrie*, written by Maxwell Geismar. Stating that *Sister Carrie* is a landmark in modern literature, Geismar spins the legend of the novel's publication his own way. First of all, Frank Norris is mentioned not as a person officially employed by Doubleday and Page, but as an enthusiastic novelist (almost an interested bystander) who recognized the potential of *Sister Carrie* and "recommended" it to the firm. Mrs.
Doubleday gets her usual share of villainy because she, as "the wife of the publisher, subsequently read the manuscript and was horrified at its frankness " (iii). The result is that even though *Sister Carrie* was published, "no copies of the first edition were ever sold" (iii). This account of the publishing history very much coincides with the author's narrative of the story as rendered in *The Colophon* in January, 1931.

Appealing to the reader's sympathy, Geismar depicts Dreiser as completely devastated by the novel's reception and unable to renew his literary ambitions for ten years after the first novel's publication. However, continuing the misinterpretation of facts, Geismar is sure that it was after the publication of Dreiser's second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), that *Sister Carrie* "was accepted on its merits" (iii).

The introduction states that *Sister Carrie*'s fate is typical of that of most Dreiser novels. Geismar reminds the reader *The "Genius,"* and *An American Tragedy* were banned in their time: the former by The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, and the latter by the similar society in Boston.

Geismar defines Dreiser as a realist who told the truth about life and who opposed Victorian ideas of gentility and refinement. Dreiser's innocence and humble origins contributed to his vision of the world, which is very similar to that of Balzac, his "closest European counterpart" (v). Hinting at Dreiser's womanizing habits, Geismar poetically labels him "a worshipper of Ashtar and Aphrodite in his early years" (vii), suggesting that it is only fair to accept human affections and impulses in all their power.

Geismar argues that the main theme of *Sister Carrie* is, "of course, the struggle of a young country girl, half aware of her powers, to protect herself against the 'cunning wiles of the city'" (vi). Geismar contends that Dreiser depicts familiar American types while unveiling the ethical hypocrisy of the
society. To his mind, the novelist fills his characters with primitive passions, "and such passions are in one sense always illegitimate, since to the degree that they elevate and transform a person, they may consume and destroy him" (vii). That is why Hurstwood is doomed: he becomes a prey to his passions. Strangely enough, Geismar does not mention the reasons for Carrie's survival and prosperity. It is left to the reader to conclude that if Hurstwood is a victim of his love, then Carrie--staying away from destroying passions, not loving anybody--is destined to win and prosper as long as she avoids such consuming and primitive passions.

The end of the 1950s witnessed a new wave of interest in Dreiser studies. Critical hostility toward Dreiser significantly lessened, paving the way for better understanding of what Dreiser had actually done with new interpretations and insights into his work. This "new wave," critically reassessing Dreiser and recognizing him as a major figure in American literature, was linked to some important works, which started to appear at the close of the 40s. Robert H. Elias's *Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature* (1949), was the first critical biography, well-reasoned and sympathetic in its approach, written by a person who knew Dreiser personally and had access to many of his papers. In 1951 appeared F. O. Matthiessen's *Theodore Dreiser*, which defended the writer on the basis of "his painfully truthful depiction of things he had experienced and observed, calling him a writer who sees no model for the type of thing he wants to do" (Gerber, 128). Van Wyck Brooks, positively describing Dreiser's contribution to American literature in *The Confident Years: 1885-1915* (1951), praised the latter's sense of wonder, ingenuousness and candor, "that is, after all, with novelists, so essential and so rare" (317). Helen Dreiser published her memoirs, *My Life with Dreiser* (1951), the same year. The book added and clarified many facts about the novelist's personal and creative life. In 1955 there
appeared *The Stature of Theodore Dreiser*, edited by Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro. It was the first collection of critical materials with the task explicitly stated on the cover of the book: to provide "a survey of the man and his work."

In 1957 several presses reprinted *Sister Carrie* with introductions by various critics. The Rinehart edition had an introduction by Kenneth S. Lynn; the American Century Series supplied an introduction written by James T. Farrell. Notwithstanding the same year of the publication, the essays differ in their emphases. Lynn presents Dreiser in the context of the "rags-to-riches" American dream. To his mind, Dreiser seems to defy literary attitudes and traditions simply because he did not himself know any traditions. Dreiser ignored what other writers had done because he wrote out of his personal experience. Although the themes and topics that Dreiser started to explore were not *terra incognita* for American writers, Lynn explains that Dreiser's success lies in his ability to escape the confining standpoint of an interested onlooker (Howells's position), melodramatic overtones of "the spirit of a rich boy seeking thrills in the slums" (about Norris's *McTeague*), and the romantically stereotyped characters of Stephen Crane's *Maggie*. Writing from his own experience, Dreiser was able to portray vulgar characters (as in *Sister Carrie*) with great authenticity. "He poured so many personal memories into his first novel," writes Lynn that "Dreiser might well have said of the principal characters, 'I am Carrie; I am Drouet; I am Hurstwood'" (vii). Lynn finds Dreiser's characters vulgar not only from the standpoint of their loose moral habits, but vulgar also in "linguistic tastes." Dubbing Dreiser "the helpless prisoner of a trite and obvious language" (ix), Lynn explains that Dreiser's stylistic clumsiness comes from the author's limited education and the absence of any awareness of the traditional standards of English prose.
Commenting on Dreiser's style, and finding it full of clichéd phrases and "outworn literary tags," Lynn nevertheless finds some "certain slangy freshness" in cases when Dreiser did not strive for effect. (ix)

Lynn, for the first time in the history of *Sister Carrie* introductions, singles out the image of the city with its blinding impact as a separate character. The city has an irresistible, hypnotic effect especially powerful at nighttime, when it is "most artificial and most fascinating" (xii). In its glitter the city is akin to the theatrical stage; consequently, for Lynn, all the characters in *Sister Carrie* are actors, because to him living in a city always implies playing roles. Lynn is sure that Dreiser depicted types defined by the roles (jobs) they play; therefore change of occupation often leads to the identity--including names--change. As the characters in *Sister Carrie* go through the identity change quite frequently, Lynn contends that they do not have real personalities, and, consequently, no real feelings.

The only emotion operative in the novel is desire. As Lynn notes, "desire is not only powerful but unquenchable .... all passion is spent on what is just beyond the horizon" (xv). But because the characters long for unattainable things with such a devoted commitment, the reader sees them as real in their dignity as well as in their tragedy.

Lynn states that the novel was so explosively fresh "that the original publisher ... had virtually suppressed it for seven years" (v). *Sister Carrie* appeared at Doubleday on recommendation of Frank Norris, but why the firm had to listen, and why Norris was in a position to "recommend" it, the introduction never uncovers. Switching to the role of Mrs. Doubleday, Lynn informs the reader that she was a social worker, "scandalized" by Dreiser's immorality. Moreover, "She was horrified by the novel and convinced her husband that it should be withdrawn" (vi). The firm published a thousand
copies, which were left without proper advertisement and promotion. Consequently, such treatment of the author and his novel contributed to the public ostracism of both, and "not until 1907 did another American publisher have the nerve to publish Sister Carrie" (vi).

Lynn's introduction opens new vistas to later refinements and explorations of Dreiser's themes. Among several merits of this piece the most obvious are Lynn's attempts to identify Dreiser's place in the American writers' cohort; relate the writer's personal qualities to the qualities of his characters; and pinpoint and interpret the driving forces of the novel. On the other hand, Lynn uncritically accepts the publishing history legend and makes no effort to discriminate between fact and fiction, which (for the reader) significantly reduces the truthfulness of his story.

James T. Farrell's introduction can be conveniently divided into three major themes: the myth of Sister Carrie's publication and critical reception; childhood influences on Dreiser's personality growth; and Sister Carrie as the individualization of the writer's insight. The first part, dealing primarily with the story of the publication of the novel, does not differ much in its basic account from any introduction reviewed earlier. Farrell, along with other critics, has no doubts that the novel was "sabotaged by its publishers" because it "enraged the moral sentiments and pieties of the Philistines" (vii). Frank Norris, as the reader for Doubleday, Page, read the manuscript of Dreiser's first novel and responded with "unqualified enthusiasm," seeing in Sister Carrie a great and original book which had to be published. (vii) Farrell believes that in Dreiser Norris saw a kindred spirit with the same literary aims. Closely following Dreiser's version, Farrell states that when the book was in page proofs, Mr. Doubleday took it home to read. His wife also read the novel and "became morally revolted. Here was a novel in which a woman sinned but did not pay the stern wages of her
transgression" (vii). However, Farrell endeavors to clear up Mrs. Doubleday's role in the legend by rendering Malcolm Cowley's opinion that Mrs. Doubleday's disapproval was not "essential." What mattered most was Mr. Doubleday's overt objection to the book, because, according to Cowley, the senior partner "detested" the novel, and "wanted nothing to do with it as a publisher" (viii). Only after Dreiser's personal insistence on his contractual rights, claims Farrell, did the publishers keep the letter of their agreement. After Sister Carrie was published, no attempt was made to sell the book. Due to Norris's efforts, some review copies went out. Farrell insists that the unsold copies neither disappeared nor were destroyed, explaining that several years later Dreiser bought them.

Farrell is among the first critics to admit that not all reviews Sister Carrie received were unfavorable, and recognizes the "mixed reception" of the novel in this country. The critic credits England and particularly Arnold Bennett with acknowledgment of the novel's strength, and underlines that "To this day, Englishmen can honestly say that they helped America to discover one of its greatest writers" (ix).

Coming out in defense of Dreiser, Farrell admits that the latter had many attackers as well as many defenders. Speaking of Dreiser's influence on the American novel, Farrell finds it "profound and lasting," and clarifies his view in the following statement: "He [Dreiser] made a major contribution to the liberation of American writers. ... In a sense, all American writers who seek to tell the truth are the heirs and beneficiaries of Theodore Dreiser" (x).

Tracing Dreiser's roots and origin, Farrell in many instances retells the facts from the novelist's autobiography, presenting and interpreting them in a psychoanalytic light. Thus Farrell sees Dreiser's style as being provoked by his early linguistic patterns: the writer in his childhood listened to German lullabies;
the first school he attended was a German-speaking one, etc. The Dreisers' family life was challenging: in every little town they lived they were the outsiders, striving to get accepted and quit their marginal existence. This could not but influence Dreiser's views and his life-long search for a theory of existence. Although Dreiser's philosophical convictions were often "inconsistent and cloudy," Farrell links the writer's determinism and social Darwinism to his early experience. (xiii)

Depicting the truth about destinies of real people, Dreiser introduces such aspects of "feelings, longing and experience in American life which hitherto had not received ... serious treatment" (xiv). Farrell marks Dreiser's accuracy in handling human emotions that registers his characters as important human beings and makes Sister Carrie "a great novel which belongs in the library of world literature" (xv).

In an introduction written in 1959, Claude Simpson continues to investigate the popularity of Sister Carrie and its author. The chilly reception of the first publication--"an opposition amounting almost to suppression"--Simpson explains by the novel's double challenge: it not only questioned conventional views of morality but also defied standards of fictional behavior. (v) Dreiser was fully aware of the discrepancy between professed standards and actual life; he knew the demanding attractions of power and money; he fathomed the conditioning role of sex in behavior patterns. Simpson, like many other critics, does not consider Dreiser's views original, for Dreiser merely selected those general propositions--Social Darwinism, natural selection, Spencer's "survival of the fittest," and a mechanistic outlook that confirmed his own experience.

Retelling the publishing history of the novel, Simpson relies heavily on Dreiser's own account of it and slightly exaggerates some basic facts. In his
interpretation, Norris, the reader for Doubleday., Page and Co., after reading the manuscript of *Sister Carrie*, recommended it "in superlatives" and "backed it vigorously" (ix). Some time later Walter Page accepted the novel for publication after it had been significantly cut by Dreiser and Henry. Upon Mr. Doubleday's return from Europe he took the proofs home and, according to Simpson, "immediately disapproved of his firm's association with the novel" (x). The critic is sure that Mr. Doubleday's decision was at least partially influenced (if not totally inspired) by his wife, "a social worker who viewed literature as something apart from life, especially those aspects of life in which Dreiser did not employ the polite formulas of magic to whisk away the reality of marital irregularity or the sordidness of poverty" (x). Simpson also assumes it as conceivable that Mr. Doubleday could have had his own opinion in the matter and conviction that *Sister Carrie* would not be a success. Nonetheless, Doubleday fulfilled his part of the agreement: the firm printed the copies, but made no effort to sell the book.

Simpson argues that *Sister Carrie* "simply dropped dead from the press" (x). Immediately contradicting this statement, Simpson clarifies that the reviews the novel received were not bad for a first novel. Although the most frequent remark used by reviewers was that the novel was "unpleasant," some reviewers noted the truthful depiction of the subject matter, in which "lies at once the strength and the horror of it," as well as commented that "as a work of literature and the philosophy of human life it comes within sight of greatness" (xi).

Simpson's analysis of the novel's publication makes it clear that the 1901 British edition propelled *Sister Carrie* into recognition, though the final acceptance in this country came in 1907 when the work was reissued and 4600 copies were sold within four months.

Simpson's introduction concentrates on Dreiser's preoccupation with documentary detail: his focus on minute details of clothing, interior decoration,
and cost of food and services—everything with which Dreiser was personally familiar is made "vivid and concrete," establishing Dreiser's commitment to "circumstantial realism" (xiii). Dreiser's exceptional skill at documenting various details, argues the critic, does not guarantee that the book is free from moral ambiguities. To Simpson, Dreiser refuses to see the problem of Carrie's "fall" in moral terms because he prudishly avoids the scene of her seduction by substituting Minnie's dream. The author dodged the detailed description of Carrie's surrender to Hurstwood, proving in Simpson's eyes, that "he is not really comfortable in throwing over the conventionalities he presumes to scorn" (xvi).

As other Dreiser scholars, Simpson easily finds faults with the novelist's style and diction, admitting nevertheless that "Dreiser's power of drama and characterization is great enough to transcend the rhetorical flaws and ideological inconsistencies of the novel" (xix).

Alfred Kazin's introduction in 1960 places Dreiser in the company of Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, and William Faulkner. Kazin states that Dreiser's novels arose from the epoch of "rugged individualism and sexual squeamishness" and successfully survived it. (9) Trying to understand Dreiser's "difficult beauty," the critic points at the writer's inability to take everything for granted, "his usual sense of wonder at the dense, peopled, factual world itself" (13). Kazin believes that because Dreiser was able to recognize and validate his own experience, he could masterfully operate facts and present a sense of "hidden dimension" and experience of "a whole generation" in any of his novels. (11)

Kazin identifies as one of Dreiser's many achievements in creating a sense of actuality his realistic portrayal of "the disproportion between a man and his world" (12). The novelist, under the influence of nineteenth-century biology
and philosophy, treats a man as an inseparable part of nature, and society as a living organism. Like the universe, which is alive and constantly seeking new shape, society "expressed sexuality, greed, social ambition, in forms that are natural to man" (14). The critic perceives Dreiser's greatest strength in the dramatization of human relationships. Seeing Dreiser as "the most cogent novelist of sex" (18), Kazin captures the ever-present connections among money, power and sex in Dreiser's novels. Moreover, he also argues that "compassion as a source of sexual emotion" singles out Dreiser's novels from most of his contemporaries. (18) According to Kazin, "Dreiser's individuals are large because they still have an enormous capacity for suffering--and for realizing their suffering" (21).

Though the introduction was written for Sister Carrie, Kazin stays away from the history of the novel's creation, publication and critical reception. He provides a general overview of Dreiser and his universe, praising Dreiser for his achievements in portraying the reality and vulnerability of a human person in it. Kazin explores the composite parts of the novelist's greatness, undoing the intricate knots of Dreiser's love for documentation, philosophy, and true knowledge of life.

Willard Thorp from the very beginning of his introduction (1962), recognizes Sister Carrie as both an important landmark and "the most controversial novel" in the literature of the twentieth century. (v) Admitting that Dreiser voluntarily accepted the role of an American Balzac, Thorp in a somewhat oversimplified manner proceeds to narrate Dreiser's biography. Reducing it all to Dreiser's extreme shyness and preoccupation with sex, Thorp admits that Dreiser had always been a failure at everything until he became a reporter. As a reporter, Dreiser was ideal for the job, for he liked to look at life
and dream himself into the life of other people, so "now he could indulge himself in vicarious experience and be paid for self-indulgence" (vi).

Thorpe's story of *Sister Carrie*’s creation and publication does not significantly differ from many others which appeared in the late 50s or early 60s. To his mind, such actions as seduction, bigamy or adultery were presented as natural in the novel because they were real events in the life of Dreiser's sister. Dreiser "had no idea that he had written an immoral book," and when the Doubleday firm made no effort to publicize the novel, the author was greatly hurt. (vii)

Rendering his version of the novel's publication, Thorp contends that Norris, as a reader for Doubleday and Page, was "delighted" with *Sister Carrie*. In fact, he assured Dreiser that he would do anything in his power to get the novel published. Walter Page indicated to Dreiser in a subsequent conversation that the firm would publish the novel. When Mr. Doubleday returned home from his trip, his wife, "a social worker with large sympathies for the poor, read the novel in proof and was horrified at the prospect of the firm's bringing out so vulgar and immoral a book" (vi). Her husband supported her conviction, and though the firm released the novel it showed no interest in its promotion. Thorp is positive that only due to Norris's efforts did there appear some newspaper reviews, several of which were favorable. The firm preferred neither to notice nor to use the good reviews; "and since the novel was difficult to come by, it quickly dropped from sight" (vi).

Thorpe believes that Dreiser wanted literary success for his first novel not only abroad (as happened in England in 1901), but in this country as well. That is why in 1906 the novelist bought the plates of his novel, and in 1907 *Sister Carrie* victoriously reappeared before the American public.
Trying to understand what was especially shocking about the novel to Americans of those days who called it "a dirty" book, Thorp reminds the reader that the theme of seduction appeared in the first English novel, *Pamela*. But it was not the seduction itself that was so disturbing. Dreiser, as Thorp argues, ignored all taboos and conventions of the day, and did not pacify the public with the image of a "reformed rake." Carrie, the fallen woman in the novel, avoids any repercussions for her immoral acts and even prospers in the end.

Thorp finds many "remarkable" things in *Sister Carrie*, and the novelist's indifference to conventions is only one of them. The critic distinguishes Dreiser's sense of accurate city-life details, which actually produced "our first full-scale city novel" (x). Commenting on the faithfully pictured "saloon world" in *Sister Carrie*, Thorp points at the underlying hypocrisy in Hurstwood's character: at home he was a loving father, but behind the bar doors he lived another, "lusty male life" (xi).

Saying that Dreiser is a literary naturalist "with some limitations," Thorp finds signs of naturalism in Dreiser's fondness for authentic detail and his ability to keep his characters at a distance, achieving "that coolness of tone which the naturalists admired" (xii). Interestingly enough, this remark directly contradicts the perception of many critics who expressed their dislike for the author's frequent intrusions in the text. For instance, Simpson notes: "He [Dreiser] is unconcerned with the problem of maintaining a consistent 'distance' from his characters" (xvii).

The year 1965 brought not only the central event of the 1960s in terms of Dreiser's biography--W. R. Swanberg's massive, exhaustively researched and often unflattering *Dreiser*, the first study by a professional biographer--but also other introductions, different in their accents. Michael Millgate's introduction demonstrates that its author was well versed in recent Dreiser criticism and well
acquainted with his legacy. Millgate's approach was to incorporate the existing body of work in the introduction and to present Dreiser as a major literary figure.

Dividing his introduction into four parts, Millgate devotes the first to Dreiser's early years and his "newspaper days" in Chicago, Pittsburgh and New York. It is interesting that by the time the introduction was written a clichéd description of Dreiser's parents had materialized. (I believe it was partially "promoted" by Dreiser himself in his very open and honest autobiographical texts *Dawn* and *A Book About Myself*, later republished as *Newspaper Days.*) Dreiser's father is always described as a "fervent Catholic," and his mother as "a gentle, courageous woman of Pennsylvanian Mennonite stock." Brother Paul gets recognition as a successful example of freedom from the house, which many children of the family wanted to emulate.

When Dreiser left home, he had numerous chances to observe life and become better acquainted with the world of fiction and philosophical thought. Particularly important were his days in Pittsburgh, where he first read Balzac and encountered the writings of Spencer, Tyndall, and other scientific philosophers, whose ideas of a mechanistic evolutionary universe Dreiser "inconsistently" adopted.

As Dreiser's imagination and ideas were firmly rooted, "imprisoned," in reality, his first novel could not but reflect his own memories and experiences. Thus Millgate is sure that Dreiser was not so much challenging contemporary assumptions of his days as he just "[was] simply writing what he knew" (xix). Dreiser's narration of the events preceding the publication of his first novel in a letter to H. L. Mencken is taken by Millgate as the undoubtedly factual account, and Dreiser's rendering of the events is reflected in the critic's version of the legend. According to Millgate, when the manuscript reached Frank Norris, the latter read it with "immense enthusiasm" because in *Sister Carrie* he recognized
the work "of a kindred spirit," of a man who came to conclusions very similar to his own. (xv) Walter Page assured Dreiser of the firm's interest in the book, but in July, when the other senior partner, Frank Doubleday, returned from a trip and read the novel's proofs, he expressed "strong disapproval of its 'immorality'" (xv). At this point in the story Millgate casts doubt on Mrs. Doubleday's role, and concedes that though Dreiser claimed that she was responsible for the firm's changed attitude, her attributed influence in the matter still remained a moot question. It took sixty-five years after the publication of the novel for anyone to admit that Mrs. Doubleday's "role in the affair has more recently been called into question" (xv).

The truthful depiction of the author's knowledge of the world was met, according to Alfred Kazin, by "a frightened press," though, as Millgate notes, many reviews were often perceptive, praising the book's "extraordinary power," "minute detail and vivid realism," recognizing the author's "great talent--possibly genius" (xvi). Millgate carefully approaches the numerous reviews, trying to demonstrate that contrary to the prevalent conception not all of them were derogatory and malevolent.

Explaining the subsequent critical history of *Sister Carrie*, the critic mentions the opposing Sherman-Mencken camps: the first attacking Dreiser for his "dreary monotony," and the second defending him for breaking new fictional paths and "speaking with a voice of a new America" (xviii). Cautiously trying to balance good and bad, admitting that Dreiser's reliance on historic facts "may suggest a certain limitation of Dreiser's imaginative range," Millgate concedes that "Dreiser's originality lay in the all-inclusiveness of his recording vision" (xxi). The critic sees Dreiser's enormous strength in his identification with his material. This identification convinces the reader of the ultimate truth of the novelist's vision, building the case for compassion for his "fallen" and "immoral"
characters. Millgate believes that Dreiser's importance lies not in how he wrote (referring to the often commented-on clumsiness of his style), but what he wrote about--his treatment of characters, settings, scenes and themes--really counts, and signifies his influence on American literature.

Arthur Edelstein's introduction (1965) is focused more on *Sister Carrie* and its characters than on the novel's critical reception. The appearance of the novel, to Edelstein, was caused by historically objective facts, specifically by the irreversible move from village to city. Thus, Dreiser is "lyricizing, however unwittingly, a fact of economic history" (xv). The resultant effect of the move was not only the reshaping of national conscience, but also the industrialization of morality. Analogous to the natural order, the societal order applied "the survival of the fittest" selection in working out its own rules. Edelstein sees Carrie as an "industrial Cinderella who begins her city life in a shoe factory," unconsciously internalizing the ethics of her environment. (xv) Therefore, when Carrie loses her job because of her illness, she does not question the justice of it: it is natural, and she takes it for granted. Urban reality is depicted in the novel as "image and force ... physical fact and state of consciousness" (xvi). As if foreseeing the advent of poststructuralism and deconstruction, Edelstein writes about Dreiser's technique: "... the language is entirely serviceable, and one slips through its surface into the strong flow of events beneath. It is there, below the language, that Dreiser's ironic effectiveness is encountered--ironic, because it results from a kind of deformity of perception, a coarseness of sensibility" (xvi).

Noting in passing the novel's "suppression," Edelstein states that the book was accepted for publication under "the urgent promptings of the novelist Frank Norris, at the time a reader for Doubleday Page" (xvi). The Doubledays are featured together as a couple in whom the book "provoked revulsion" (Mrs. Doubleday's imputed influence on her husband is ignored), and one of the
reasons for their evident dislike of the book is that "such a work could harm his [Doubleday's] business" (xvi). Because of this fear Doubleday did nothing to promote the novel's circulation and sales, and only seven years later after *Sister Carrie* took on the imprint of a different publisher, the book started to gain popularity and critical attention in America.

Carrie's character gets an interesting reading in this introduction. Edelstein calls her "a bewildered nun of the industrial order," and an "asexual sex object," because for him Carrie is emotionally toneless. (xviii) The paradox of her being is that she is attracted to men as long as they keep the appearance of power, of "controlling ... sources of energy" (xviii). The emptiness of her existence is compared to the rocking chair: it is moving, but going nowhere.

In 1967 Clarence A. Andrews wrote an introduction to the Airmont Classic edition. Pondering answers to *Sister Carrie's* popularity and longevity, Andrews remarks that at the time of its first publication the novel was considered "immoral" because it portrayed unspeakable behavior and made no moral judgments about it. In fact, Carrie, the "fallen" woman, despite all written and unwritten fictional rules, prospers and succeeds in life. This was very contrary to the "success-versus-failure" theme common in American fiction of the time.

Explaining the novel's publication history, and delivering it mainly in accordance with Dreiser's own account of it, Andrews comes up with a somewhat modified version. Both narrations coincide to the point that Dreiser took the manuscript to Doubleday, Page. There Norris (whose position with the company is left unidentified) read the novel. Reportedly, he said that it was the best novel he had ever read and recommended it for publication. The company signed a contract with Dreiser to publish the book. According to Andrews, the firm's senior partner on coming back from a trip to Europe (after the contract had been already signed), found his wife "quite upset over the novel" (4). (The
implication of this version is that Mrs. Doubleday did not accompany her husband on his trip, and, moreover, that she acted as an unofficial censor for the company, reading the proofs of novels before they appeared in print.) Mr. Doubleday himself found the book "immoral," and informed Dreiser that the company would not publish it. However, after consultation with a lawyer the company decided to print the novel but make no effort to sell it. "Some thousand copies were published" and only "a few" were sent to reviewers. (5) Andrews admits that though in general the reviews were favorable, the events discouraged Dreiser so much that he could not write fiction for almost a decade.

For Andrews Carrie is a prototype of contemporary entertainers, very much like Marilyn Monroe and other people "who create for others a world of escape and fantasy by living in one themselves" (6). Though the critic reads Carrie as a symbol of superficial success, he concedes that Carrie's success comes because she is able to find her own way and exercise a will of her own.

Published in 1969, Louis Auchincloss's introduction starts with a brief summary of W. A. Swanberg's unflattering vision of Dreiser. Analyzing the picture of a "violent, opinionated, bigoted, unlovable man" Auchincloss tries to understand how such a bad writer, "the least intellectual of our novelists," could have been such a great one. (vi) The critic thinks that the closest literary relative of Dreiser is Zola, because both writers are marked by "a contagious enthusiasm for their subject matter" (vi). Even when they describe grim and appalling things, they still continue to entertain the reader, evoking feelings of fascination instead of depression. Not only is the reader imbued with the writer's energy but s/he is also infused with his attachment to life and love of it.

Skewing the history of the novel's publication, Auchincloss states that Dreiser was the best at the outset of his career. *Sister Carrie* is a perfect work of fiction, because "the characters respond to stimuli, without ... overpowering their
environment and without ... surrendering to it" (viii). The plot is geometrically built--in the end the main characters replace each other on the social ladder. Interpreting Carrie's character, Auchincloss notes her invaluable asset: "the realization that she owes nothing to the men who keep her" (ix).

Auchincloss's main thrust is that the end of the novel fails to correspond to the earlier general plot development. Carrie's character, to his mind, produces a very sudden and inexplicable change. Her "doomed" condition--to be always unhappy in the endless search for something unattainable--does not persuade him for two reasons. First, he does not see "why it is so bad to dream such happiness," and second, it is unfathomable "that Carrie was such a dreamer" (x). The critic argues that Carrie stayed rather inactive throughout the novel; only actual need drove her to the stage, not a passionate desire to express "the churning emotion within herself" (x). That is why Auchincloss perceives Carrie's union with a richer man as a reasonable and logical conclusion for her character.

Jack Salzman's introduction, published by the Johnson Reprint Corporation (1969), was written for a facsimile of the 1901 Heinemann edition. Abandoning any attempts at the characters' interpretation, Salzman calls attention to the publishing history of Sister Carrie. Placing the time of the novel's creation as the year 1889, the critic unwittingly distorts the factual information and misleads the reader as to the actual date of the book's outset.

Salzman follows a familiar pattern of many introductions, telling first about Dreiser's failure to get the book published by different agencies, and then about the mixed press the novel received in this country. Finally, he concentrates his attention on Sister Carrie's fate on the other side of the ocean.

Assimilating Dreiser's original account, Salzman produces his vision of the story. After Harper & Brothers rejected the novel on the grounds of its
unappealing qualities for feminine readers, Dreiser took it to Doubleday, Page. There it was given to Norris, then a reader for the firm, who was "greatly impressed by it" (vi). Norris wrote Dreiser a letter, assuring the writer that he would do everything in his power to get the novel published. Next, Page read the manuscript, congratulated the novelist on a "good piece of work," and asked to make a few final revisions after which the formal contract would be signed. (vi) The author felt confident that the novel would soon be released. However, Doubleday, who returned from vacation, read the manuscript and decided not to publish the book. Salzman states that "the reason for Doubleday's decision still remains open to conjecture" (vi), but he himself did not venture to probe this matter for any answers. Thus, Mrs. Doubleday and her role are erased, and Mr. Doubleday is presented as a man of incalculable temper.

Salzman also draws attention to the reaction of the American press to the novel. The critic notes that reviews were "mixed": some found the book "too realistic;" others thought that it was filled with various faults; and a few were able to understand its elements of greatness. (vii)

Switching to Heinemann's Dollar Library series, Salzman explains that its purpose was to bring talented writers from the United States to English readers. As the series had specifications as to the form and length of the books, Sister Carrie had to undergo substantial cuts: Dreiser was asked to condense the first 200 pages into 80. The cuts were made with Henry's help, and the novel appeared with a somewhat decentered plot: "it is the tragedy of George Hurstwood that dominates the novel" (viii).

The reception in England was more favorable, "although it was not quite so favorable as the legend has it" (viii). Importantly, the novel was noticed and had good reviews in England's leading literary journals, such as The Spectator and Athenaeum. Subsequently, that helped to establish its more favorable
reputation in this country, because "yet had not it been for its publication in England in 1901, Sister Carrie might well have remained unread" (x).

The latest introduction to Sister Carrie came out in 1982. It is written by E. L. Doctorow, who presented his interpretation of the author, his life and the novel in the light of recent Dreiser scholarship. Telling the novelist's story, Doctorow explicitly reveals his knowledge of Dreiser's biography as well as critical studies. The succinct but accurate rendition of the vicissitudes that the novelist had to encounter runs parallel to many details described in Richard Lingeman's Theodore Dreiser: At the Gates of the City, 1871-1907, and Dreiser's own autobiographies. Reiterating the thought of Van Wyck Brooks and Alfred Kazin about the ever-present sense of wonder in Dreiser's fiction, Doctorow defines it as "a perfect description of the state of readiness in a novelist" (vi). Standing outside mainstream New England influences, "the genteel tradition," Dreiser was able to express his literary and cultural values in a unique and independent way.

His first novel, never sexually explicit--neither in the uncut version of the manuscript published in 1981 by the University of Pennsylvania Press, nor in its edited version after the Harper rejection--troubled the then reader's sense of proprieties. Writing according to the principles of realism, Dreiser showed his heroine neither as punished nor repentant. Moreover, he proved by his novel that it was possible to improve one's own conditions by behaving, in the eyes of the convention, "badly" and "indecently."

Doctorow's comment on the novel's publishing history and reception is very brief. Essentially, it occupies only three sentences out of a four-sentence paragraph. Starting with the book's first rejection by Harper Brothers and turning to Doubleday, Page, Doctorow states that "Doubleday, Page published it [the novel] with trepidation, and therefore badly. It came out in 1900, sold less
than seven hundred copies, and created for Dreiser the reputation of naturalist-barbarian that followed him down the years" (vii). It is evident that Doctorow is more interested in textual interpretation than in (true or false) facts of the novel's publication, although "less than seven hundred copies" is a gross exaggeration compared to 456 copies.

Employing the metaphors of the modern industrial world--such as Minnie's dream of Carrie's fall into a dark pit of a coal mine--Dreiser, according to Doctorow, creates the universe "without reference to any other state than the material" (ix). Money defines the life of the characters: "their very beings are contingent upon it" (ix). Hurstwood, stripped of his habitual exterior surroundings, including a comforting bank account, enters a terrible decline. Carrie, going through life "without an idea in her head," is aroused not by men, but by signs of material possessions--clothes, jewelry, beautiful houses--and finally discovers that her talent for acting lies in her ability to represent "the world's longing" (x).

Doctorow sees longing as a double-faced asset: on the one hand, it can lead to destruction, for the desire for something more of material existence that can never be fulfilled; on the other hand, it can serve as redemption, because desire in itself includes some hope for its realization.

Any introduction under analysis appears to be a double-layered construct. Underneath it has the remnants of the assimilated and appropriated original Dreiser story and on the top one can often find an accumulation of facts, fiction, and wishful thinking of the critic. As a result, the reader encounters similar (often identical) words, phrases and grammatical constructions with little understanding whether they belong to the original (created by Dreiser himself) myth, or represent a newer creation. Besides, Dreiser was not always consistent
in rendering the story himself in letters, autobiographies or other written and oral testimonies.

The verisimilitude of the legend was sustained by numerous people close to Dreiser: his secretaries, his lovers, some literary critics of that time. Dorothy Dudley, picking up Dreiser's rendition of the story in *Dreiser and the Land of the Free* (1932), in many instances supports and expands it, making it more vivid with memories of other people closely involved in the case. She also mentions Vrest Orton's bibliography of Dreiser's work, published in 1929, that included the novel's analysis card of the sales-record. The numbers on the card came from Mr. Doubleday's office, informing Orton that the first edition of *Sister Carrie* consisted of 1008 copies. Out of those, 129 were sent out for reviews, 465 sold in the first sixteen months after its publication, and the remaining copies--423--were turned over to F. J. Taylor & Company together with stereotype plates of the novel that the firm purchased. (In 1901 Dreiser signed a contract with J. F. Taylor for the reissuing of *Sister Carrie* and the publication of *Jennie Gerhardt*; the contract, however, never came to fruition.) The total royalty the author received from Doubleday was $68.40.

The legend had several hard-to-deny aspects: it was believable, and therefore left unquestioned for a long time; it had great vitality and tenacity, and hence, people took it for granted; and it was extremely appealing as it embodied the battle between the Philistines and Art. As the people who created the myth or were part of it are dead now, it is hard to authenticate, say, the role of Mrs. Doubleday and the feelings of her husband.

Nevertheless, there are some established and irrefutable facts in the story. It is evident that the first publication of the book did not bring success to its author and had a certain detrimental effect on his health. It is also clear that later Dreiser used the legend to his own advantage, for example, in an attempt to
boost the sales of the second edition. Nowadays Dreiser scholars can identify the exact number of books sold, review copies sent out, and the number of copies that never found their way to their readers.

The exact role of Frank Norris and Mrs. Doubleday in the publication of the novel cannot be determined. Norris died in October 1902 of peritonitis at a youthful age. After the year 1903 Dreiser and Henry grew apart. Dreiser preferred not to mention Henry's instrumental role in the matter of editing and publication of his first novel, and withdrew the dedication to Henry from the novel's subsequent republications. Thus Norris became an ideal hero-figure for the legend: his duty as a reader for Doubleday cannot be denied, and his ambivalent role in the affair is confirmed by the existing Dreiser-Norris correspondence. At the same time, however, nobody knows whether Norris was employed by Doubleday, Page full-time or part-time, and how significant was his influence with the company. Jack Salzman, in "The Publication of Sister Carrie," notices that Norris was extremely cautious about criticizing the firm or its representatives in handling the situation: "There are, for example, apparently no extant letters in which he expressed his discontent" (Salzman, 1967, 126). Evidently, Norris had his own reasons. Besides the fear of jeopardizing his job, Norris had an interesting personal relationship with Doubleday, Page. When he submitted his McTeague for publication by Doubleday, the latter, according to Lingeman, insisted that Norris withhold McTeague "until Doubleday had published a lesser (and tamer novel), a conventional sea tale called Moran of the Lady Letty" (Lingeman, 231). This fact leads to speculation that Norris might in fact favored the publisher's suggestion that Dreiser should postpone the publication of Sister Carrie and wait until his next novel would be published first: in a way, indirectly preparing the public for the unusual book.
In a letter to Franklin Walker dated May 4, 1931, Frank Doubleday indicates the lack of involvement of his wife (who died in Hong Kong in 1918) in the "suppression" of the novel: "I don't think that Mrs. Doubleday ever saw the book; at all events, I know that she expressed no opinion which affected the treatment of it by the publishing house" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 463).

According to the existing documents, Mrs. Doubleday's role in the "suppression" of the novel was first mentioned by Norris in a conversation with Henry, and the latter related it to Dreiser. In Norris's account, Mrs. Doubleday hated the novel and influenced her husband's decision as to its publication and the lack of advertising. Curiously, Mrs. Doubleday proved to be a convenient target for Dreiser as well: Dreiser never admitted that he disliked Frank Doubleday. In fact, when he heard about Doubleday's decision not to publish the novel, he wrote to Henry that "Doubleday is sincere. He has every reason to see merit in novels submitted, since out of them he derives his income. If he objects so strongly as to break his agreement--well, he must have ample reasons. They must be vital to him or he would not attempt this" (quoted in Pizer, 1970, 440). Accusations of Mrs. Doubleday for Sister Carrie's initial failure before the reading public were perceived true, and therefore were not contested for many years. To the public Mrs. Doubleday embodied a meddling and snobbish woman who acted behind the scenes, and had an enormous influence over great (male) minds of the day. It is left only to speculate why Norris brought up Mrs. Doubleday's name (what were his own feelings toward Doubleday's wife) and whether there was any truth in his story. Apparently, the story of a meddling woman and a weak but wise husband has a lasting appeal. Nowadays its various versions can be found in numerous publications about prime-ministers, presidents, executives of fortune companies and their wives. The public is often inclined to suspect that wives constitute an invisible threat:
they plot behind the scenes and pursue their interests by acting out a scenario of their own, and interfere in their husbands' affairs. It is hard to discern the main implication here: either men are too weak or women too influential.

Retelling the history of *Sister Carrie*’s reception in this country, the critics often fall from one extreme into another: some indicate that there appeared no reviews in the papers, while the others say that all the reviews were unfavorable. In fact, it is known that it was probably Norris who sent out over hundred copies of the novel for review; the standard Dreiser bibliography lists twenty-six reviews between November 1900 (the time of publication) and March 1901 in American newspapers. Out of those about five can be characterized as downright negative, and ten or so are mixed. In a letter to Fremont Older (1923) and in an article to *The Colophon* (1931) Dreiser mentions the number of copies distributed by Norris: in the letter it was three hundred, while the article states (closer to real facts) that the number of books sent to reviewers was a hundred. However, Dreiser did not comment on the quality and quantity of the reviews: his main concern was the issue of the novel’s "suppression."

Due to the evident circumstances (the lack of necessary documents; Dreiser’s desire to embellish fragments of the story and reject some facts; the public’s willingness to accept the story as it was told by the writer), it is difficult to ascertain certain facts, which makes the story of *Sister Carrie*’s creation, publication, and critical reception "forever young." Generation after generation tries to undo the myth, always finding something new and intriguing in it, and investigating not only the times gone, but often linking the novel and its history to the present. The story of *Sister Carrie*’s publication and "suppression" vividly demonstrates the ways myths are created, propelled, and sustained.
CHAPTER 2
POSITIONING OF SISTER CARRIE
IN THE CULTURE OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

The Soviet apparatus of literary criticism, along with the official ideology of the country, fully realized that without support from well-recognized political and cultural leaders from other countries the representation of the image of the Soviet Union would suffer. From the very beginning of the country's existence Vladimir Lenin, as well as his followers and supporters, tried to unveil the attractiveness of the Russian experiment and bring if not ardent supporters then at least people sympathizing with the idea into the country. The Soviet government spared no expense to insure that the best remarks, responses and impressions of the invited guests would be published, and made known to as many countries and peoples in the world as possible. The intentions of the Soviet government were many-fold: first, it was vital to stop any possible intervention and begin the construction of the country; second, to gain many foreign supporters automatically meant not only the betterment of the image of the country, but also the recognition of its role in the world arena; third, the recognition in and of itself leads to promotion and propagandizing of communist ideas, thus indirectly paving the way for the desired world revolution.

One of the main tasks of the revolution in Russia, according to Lenin, was to attract and employ as many representatives of the so-called "intelligentsia" as possible. Of course, the task was primarily applied to the Russian members of this class, but foreigners were not forgotten either. For instance, every year for the celebration of the Great October Socialist Revolution a large number of foreign delegates was invited not only to partake
in the parade in Red Square, but also to stay for some time after the celebrations, visit many establishments and institutions, and produce favorable comments on the state of things in the Soviet Union.

In 1927 Theodore Dreiser, among others, was invited to come. Dreiser’s short stories and his novel, Sister Carrie, along with novels by other prominent American writers—Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner—had been translated into Russian and their authors were well-known in the country. According to American Literature in Russian Translations and Criticism (1977), the publishing scale of American writers’ works in the USSR from 1918 to 1974 was enormous: during this period over 3767 books by American writers were published in 52 different languages of the Soviet Union for a total edition of 170 million copies. In the past 15 years works by 700 American writers were translated into 30 different languages of the USSR.

Dreiser’s works (his short stories mainly) were first translated into Russian in 1925. Two years later came the translations of his novels, Jennie Gerhardt, and Sister Carrie. The next year witnessed the beginning of the first Russian collected edition of his works (altogether there are three twelve-volume editions; the second came out in 1955 and the third in 1977). It took two years and much dedication from the editor—Sergei Dinamov, Dreiser’s personal friend—to get the first collected edition of Dreiser’s works published.

Therefore, coming to the Soviet Union in 1927, Dreiser embodied not only a renowned figure for Russian literary readers and critics, but also a desired object for the purposes of Soviet propaganda. Judging by Dreiser’s Russian Diary and R. Kennell’s recollections (Dreiser and the Soviet Union), the author was fully aware of the implied responsibility, but, contrary to his hosts’ expectations, he oftentimes produced “boastful loyalty to American capitalism” (8). On the other hand, as Thomas P. Riggio notes in his Introduction to
Dreiser's Russian Diaries, one can always sense "something close to a willingness to be converted beneath the heated exchanges, a desire to believe that an ideal society is possible, if only someone could answer his questions and quiet his vast skepticism about human nature" (11).

Theodore Dreiser as a writer and person interested Soviet critics for several reasons. Russian literary scholarship has always depicted Dreiser as a martyr figure, somewhat similar to Jesus Christ in his sufferings for the betterment of mankind. Dreiser's personal flaws, such as his sexual promiscuity, were either interpreted as valuable assets—that his numerous sexual encounters enabled him realistically portray and "better" understand the woman's psychology—or they were completely erased. Many American scholars saw the author's German origin as his personal limitation, attributing to it his supposedly turgid language and uncouth prose. Russian critics favorably treated this part of Dreiser's background, pointing out that due to it Dreiser could artistically recognize and portray the needs and demands of the working class. In fact, many Soviet scholars (including such renowned Dreiser scholars as I. I. Anisimov and Y. N. Zasurskiy) spend considerable time, while analyzing Dreiser's works, on biographical details from Dreiser's childhood years. Often the fact that Dreiser's father was at one time a prosperous businessman is stifled; the family's dire economic plight is emphatically exposed. Thus, the author and his life were "purified" and white-washed before the general public. His image had to fall into the category of a "peace-fighter," i.e., the person who suffers for the general course and is devoid of any personal failings. With this aim in mind Soviet critics very often purposely neglected or misinterpreted facts from Dreiser's life, or openly manipulated them. This had various causes, including their tendencies to be prudish, puritanical in the treatment of the material, or squeamish in presenting some biographical data. I think an
example will illustrate the point better. For instance, when describing Dreiser's years as a free-lance writer in New York, Russian critics tend to use transliteration in rendering the names of such periodicals as *Cosmopolitan* (Kosmopolitan), *Harper's Monthly* (Kharperz Mansli), *Era's Magazine* (Eraz Magazin), etc. They encounter a kind of a stumbling block when they come to *Success*--the name sounds too close (almost identical for non-English speakers to the "forbidden" word in the lexicon, i.e., sex)--and along with transliteration they prefer to give the actual translation of the name of the magazine; in a way, implicitly saying that Dreiser wrote for "good" and reputable periodicals.

Another distinctive emphasis of the Soviet criticism lies in the depiction of Dreiser's social role, including his self-identification with many of his oppressed characters. While many American scholars still believe that Dreiser had a broad-minded but somewhat limited understanding of the existing conditions--that his views were more folly than real, that his beliefs were mainly produced by his hereditary instincts--Soviet colleagues bring up the social aspect of his prose, specifically the depiction of typical characters, their social orientation and conditioning, and Dreiser's general denunciation of the social system.

Dreiser criticism in the former Soviet Union can be conveniently divided into two phases. The first started when Dreiser was still alive, and was an attractive commodity for Russian ideologists. Trying to explain the author's position and peculiar philosophical views, critics often remarked that after the 1927 insightful trip to the Soviet Union Dreiser began to part with his illusions and started to formulate the idea that bourgeois democracy was a blind covering the dictatorship of financial capital. Dinamov in *Theodore Dreiser Is Coming Our Way* (1931), noting the mixture of biologism and sociology, fatalism and realism, mysticism and materialism that Dreiser professed, also underlines
that "the movement forward has just begun. And begun decisively. Sometime his strong bonds with the bourgeois world will snap" (132). The first phase of critical interest in Dreiser in the former USSR is characterized by strong criticism of capitalist society in general and distinctly pronounced militant political tone of critical essays in particular. Dreiser's name is used by recognized authorities in the field (e.g., I. I. Anisimov, Y. N. Zasurskiy) in many instances as an example of the struggle of an honest man against the "jungles" of capitalism. Properly speaking, many critical essays of that period do not deal with literary analysis per se. Instead, they dedicate much time and effort to the vivid description of the advantages of one system and evident disadvantages of the other.

The second stage in Dreiser criticism is relatively recent in the former Soviet Union. This period started after the breakup of the country. Now when people do not need to quote the classics of Marxism-Leninism to get a degree in literature, they can indulge in literary criticism rather than in the warfare between two different systems. Recent publications on Dreiser, reflecting the new trend, carefully scrutinize the accumulated body of critical materials on the author, are more objective in dealing with biographical data, and thoroughly examine his legacy and creative work.

I. I. Anisimov's book of collected articles, Modern American Literature, published in 1950, was one of the first attempts to critically analyze the development of American literature. Written with an emphasis on separating works by "democratically progressive" writers from "imperialistically decadent" literature fit for pulp, Anisimov resorts to Lenin's vision of a national culture, for the latter stated that in any national culture there are two national cultures. Coming from this premise, Anisimov believes that "in modern America the opposition between the reactionary pseudoculture and democratic culture has reached the final expression" (5). As an example, he draws attention to the
destructive criticism of H. L. Mencken. Anisimov believes that Mencken's role in the literary movement of the 20s bore an undermining character: Mencken tried to protect American realists from the "destructive" influence of socialist ideas, and thus purposely glorified the weakest sides of their creative writings. Besides, Mencken wanted to prevent progressive writers from finding a way to the US people, to the workers' socialist movement. In the case of Dreiser, according to Anisimov, Mencken pretended to be his friend and protect him from critics' attacks, while in reality his aim was, when glorifying Dreiser, to consolidate Dreiser's (hindering) naturalistic objectivism and instill the feeling that the only "Dreiser" thing to do is to watch (fatalistically) the game of elemental forces. But in the fight for Dreiser the reaction was the loser, and the American people—the winner.

The critic implicitly reveals his own preference for Dreiser-the-socialist, stressing that from the beginning of his career as a writer Dreiser acted as a courageous accuser of the capitalist society. His revolutionary outlook, which the author adopted in the Soviet epoch, has raised his creativity to a new level. Despite some petty-bourgeois individualism, which hindered his transition to the side of a new world, everything written by Dreiser after 1917 (the year of the October Revolution in Russia), is directly or indirectly connected with his understanding that a new historic epoch had begun.

In 1951 Y. N. Zasurskiy wrote a foreword and commentary to Dreiser's Essays and Articles, published in Moscow. Much in the same vein as the previous critic, Zasurskiy singles out the purifying effect of the Revolution on Dreiser, saying that it served as a lighthouse for Dreiser and millions of others seeking their way to communism, liberating themselves from the fetters of bourgeois ideology. Noting in passing on Sister Carrie, Zasurskiy states that the
novel describes the fate of a simple American girl, the corrupting influence of American reality, and the milieu's animosity toward genuine art.

Dwelling more on Dreiser's impressions of his trip to the Soviet Union, Zasurskiy comments on the writer's accurate details and his favorable depiction of the trip in *Dreiser Looks at Russia* (1928). Interestingly enough, the book by itself was not translated in the former Soviet Union--in fact, was not "legally" prohibited, but silenced--though frequently and exclusively quoted selectively by English-reading Dreiser scholars. Only in 1988 were several chapters translated and published in a separate book about Dreiser.

In 1957 Zasurskiy published, *Theodore Dreiser: Writer and Publicist*. This is a detailed study of the writer's life, with many references to his autobiography, *Dawn* (1931), biography by R. H. Elias, *Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature* (1949), and articles on Dreiser, which appeared in such magazines as *International Literature* and *Literature of the Revolution*. Though the study is not free of discrepancies--e.g., the number of children in the Dreiser family, number of jobs that Dreiser held, his reasons for quitting his reporter position, etc.--the book is among the first serious endeavors to analyze Dreiser's fiction.

The chapter on *Sister Carrie* opens with a statement that the novel reveals "a new page in the history of the development of realism in American literature" (14). Recognizing the novels by Henry Blake Fuller, Stephen Crane, Hamlin Garland, and Frank Norris as the forerunners of *Sister Carrie*, the critic admits that Dreiser went further, by completing the formative period of the "protest novel," and creating a vast social canvas. Dreiser managed to combine scrupulous motivation of the characters' actions with the wide scope of social phenomena of American reality, creating a deep and profound criticism of the imperialist United States.
Zasurskiy calls attention to two main problems in Dreiser's first novel: the sad fate of "little" people in capitalist America, and the place and role of art in the life of society. The critic's analysis of Carrie makes it clear that the initial egoism and desire for material welfare are the characteristic traits which dictate Carrie's actions. Carrie lost the battle for herself because she could not stand the intensive work, got no help from her relatives (especially from her sister), and resorted only to the cold calculations of her mind. Indeed, the critic thinks, all the motives of her actions are quite cynical. As she rises on the social ladder, each of her new steps is in fact a new moral fall. Carrie gains relative material welfare by losing her best human qualities, and her best developed features are egoism and money-grubbing. Zasurskiy suggests that in Carrie's character Dreiser blames bourgeois America for Carrie's corruption and dollar-mania.

More specifically, the critic notes, Carrie's fall is evident in the evolution of her attitude toward art. When she takes part in a performance for the first time, she tries to act and embody the character. Later, Carrie connects the stage with the possibility to gain material success, and the theater takes the place of her former lovers—providing money, comfort and prosperity. Carrie sees the theater as a profitable business, not as a way to be devoted to the service of art. Most of all she is interested in the sums of money she receives for her services; squandering her talent on dollars Carrie can never be happy. Another cause of her unhappiness Zasurskiy sees in Carrie's inability to identify herself with the rich—images of poor people are constantly haunting her; she is rich by means of her moral falls.

Shifting attention to Hurstwood, Zasurskiy notes that his fall down the social ladder is caused by societal circumstances, by an unlawful set of rules in bourgeois society. The scholar interprets Hurstwood's insatiable newspaper
reading as a symbolic rejection of the fight for life, withdrawal from the real life struggle.

Hurstwood exposes the mendacity of the slogan by American imperialism apologists, who state that any American man can become a millionaire; in fact, by all the logic of his character's development Hurstwood (and the book) says: any American can become poor, turn into a beggar, into another Hurstwood. (26)

Zasurskiy stresses that Sister Carrie truthfully depicts the main conflict of capitalist America: the contradiction between labor and capital. Dreiser's principles of realism manifest themselves in social motivation of his characters' actions and fortunes; by means of different characters Dreiser discloses a profound conformity in the development of the capitalist society; his realism is also evident in numerous minute realistic details, in the depiction of city scenes and landscapes. *Sister Carrie* is typical of Dreiser's creative "handwriting": it is a biography-novel, where the main plot evolves around the principal character, and the other characters supplement and amplify the evolution of the central character. Zasurskiy believes that the novel became a starting-point for the rapid growth of literature of realism in this country early in the 20th century.

Ivan Anisimov is another "apostle" of Dreiser in Soviet criticism. Judging by the comments of Anisimov's close friend, Knipovich, Dreiser and Anisimov met when the former was on his trip in the Soviet Union. "Visits and discussions with Dreiser helped the young Soviet critic to understand better the turbulent inner world of this great writer; the writer who was very vulnerable, persecuted and ostracized in the USA, as if subjected to excommunication from society there" (Knipovich, 4). Anisimov's essay, *Theodore Dreiser*, was first printed as the Introduction to the second collected edition of Dreiser's works in 1955.
Later, it was reprinted many times in various books and publications on the subject of American literature.

Anisimov starts off his essay by saying that with each new Dreiser novel one can feel his mounting indignation with imperialist America. ...this America met the voice of a new writer with animosity and tried to silence him. Dreiser was able to withstand and win the fight with the prevailing reactionary forces only because he found the way to people, by overcoming all the obstacles. (3)

Importantly, Anisimov notes, the way to the people (the working masses) was the same as the way to critical realism, which is evident in Dreiser's first novels. The American author raised disturbing questions about contemporary reality and voiced the discontent which had been accumulating in the lower strata of American society.

Soviet criticism of *Sister Carrie* is generally uninterested in the history of the novel's publication. Sometimes there is a remark about Arthur Henry--mainly that it was after the summer visit to his place that Dreiser decided to try his hand at a novel. Also Frank Norris is mentioned several times as the key person in the novel's publication: "due to the support of the outstanding American realist-writer--Frank Norris--the novel of an obscure and unknown writer gets published" (Anisimov, 5). But one thing for Soviet criticism is indisputable: *Sister Carrie* opened a long literary life for its author.

Anisimov sees *Sister Carrie* as a social novel that convincingly shows the contrast between rich and poor, the parasites of the society and the outcasts, and that exposes capitalist America without its glitter. This contrast is the novel's special feature, which helps to develop description of the social environment where the action of the novel occurs.
When Carrie comes to Chicago she has modest and honest aspirations, but the glittering theatric appearance of the big city fascinates her, making her realize that one can never be successful staying pure and honest. Carrie has to compromise with her conscience in order to try the comforts of civilization. Her stay with Drouet, then with Hurstwood (presented in the novel as something absolutely normal and natural) gives Carrie the chance to live a comfortable but empty life. The work in the theater cannot give her full satisfaction because the theater itself is far from art and inspiration, being only a link in the commercial chain. Everything surrounding Carrie is artificial; nobody can be happy in a society that kills and maims talents instead of nurturing them. Anisimov is sure that the "ugliness" of capitalist society is responsible for the impossibility of human happiness.

The 70s brought a renewed interest in Dreiser and his writings. L. G. Pankova's book, *Theodore Dreiser: Life and Creative Life*, published in 1974, is written in much the same vein as the books by Zasurskiy and Anisimov. The critic, however, identifies Dreiser's creative manner as a coexistence (within the frame of the same novel) of naturalism and romanticism. She believes naturalism is evident in detailed descriptions of the realities of life; romanticism is pronounced in the author's attitude toward the fate of a simple worker, morally handicapped by inhuman conditions of existence.

Identifying the beginning of "a radical change of the form and content of the American novel" (17) with Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, Pankova is sure that a variety of American critics and biographers try to minimize Dreiser's influence on contemporary American literature. To her mind, the principles of realism manifest themselves in the novel in the depiction of typical characters, and in the exposition of interconnected social circumstances and people's fates.
Carrie's character, Pankova contents, proves that bourgeois society perniciously affects the individual, stimulating the development of egoism and consumerism. Carrie discovers relatively early—the life does not give her much of a choice—that she can be comfortably positioned without wearing herself out. She does not hesitate or think much over the causes of the easy success: her conscience (in this reading) is silent, and the threat of poverty too overpowering. First she understands happiness as material stability, and without any pronounced feelings for her lovers prefers being a kept woman over working in a sweatshop. The fear of poverty is stronger than any moral laws.

The critic calls attention to the main thesis of the novel, stating "that in the society of social inequality, common egoism, and self-interest, the way to material welfare causes the loss of genuine human and spiritual values" (19).

Hurstwood's accidental meeting with Carrie was a beginning of his end. His passion was overriding: he reached the point when the mind does not rule the feelings. Hurstwood left his family, committing a crime and gradually declining from a prosperous businessman into a homeless person. Interpreting the significance of Hurstwood's character, Pankova concludes that Dreiser's main idea was to show the tragedy of the forcibly alienated individual, the conflict between labor and capital, and the fight of workers against monopolies (exemplified in the chapter about New York tram-workers strike). "The novel demonstrated the author's uncompromised break away from American puritan traditions, because Dreiser, throwing away any apologies and any shame, managed to tear the mask off the things inaccessible for general public" (22).

Tatiana N. Denisova in Modern American Novel (1976), examines the process of formation of the social novel in American literature. She believes that by the end of the second decade of this century the "construction" of the social novel was completed and the vivid results were noticeable in works of such
authors as Dreiser, Norris and Sinclair. These writers made direct connections between the development of an individual and the social environment. The objective conclusion of their creative writing was, for Denisova, "the incompatibility of capitalism with the normal conditions of human existence; the antidemocratic and anti-popular character of capitalism" (65). Denisova admits that malicious attacks on Dreiser's, Lewis's, and Norris's creative works were dictated by the objectives and purposes of ideological struggle, by the desire to deprive American literature of its social voice.

According to Denisova, in *Sister Carrie* Dreiser depicts the true features of the "gilded" age: the power of money, the absence of justice in the unjust society. The novel is a powerful if plain story about a girl from a working family who wants to find her way in the deceitful world of the bourgeoisie. The story was modeled after one of Dreiser's sisters, who served as a prototype for the main character.

Carrie is the central character; all other characters appear only when they come into contact with her. On coming to Chicago Carrie inhales air saturated with craving for money and prohibited "pleasures." What Carrie dreads most is the lack of money, poverty and hard physical labor. Because of her fears she decides to choose easy street—to become a kept woman, without any feelings for the first man. To prove her point, the critic stresses: "She wants to build her life the way they advertise it on numerous bill-boards, and retreats in the face of difficulties from any moral norms inculcated by her parents; afterwards she just tramples on any conception of good and humane" (51).

Denisova sees Hurstwood's role as illustrative of inhuman relationships in a capitalist society: when a person loses his money, he loses his value in society, even in the eyes of his close relatives. Without monetary support an
individual turns into nothing. Thus, the social character of Dreiser's criticism lies in his ability to correlate social forces with individual destinies.

*Portraits of American Writers* (1979), written by Sergei Baturin, is a mix of serious biographical studies and literary criticism. Creatively recasting many Soviet and foreign publications, Baturin comes up with one of the best (in terms of completeness) Soviet biographies of Dreiser. The critic, however, follows the "unwritten" maxim of Soviet criticism and tries to avoid/erase "piquant" details of the author's private life: his separation from his first wife, his various infatuations and liaisons, etc.

Despite the similarity of critical responses to *Sister Carrie*—shifting the blame to society and away from the individual—Baturin finds his own ways to interpret the novel. From the outset he states that from a life melodrama Dreiser creates a realistic novel, because "it depicts typical characters in typical circumstances" (163). Dreiser was one of the first writers who admitted that most "American" scenes are not always cheerful. *Sister Carrie* does not show the good (or best) sides of American life, "it rebels against stagnant bourgeois-religious moral conventions" (170).

Baturin asserts that the main theme of the novel is the individual and society, in particular the fate of a typical American woman in a typical American big-city environment. The author raises the question of expectations of an innocent young woman in a thriving bourgeois society, and immediately supplies the answer: there are only two ways. There is the gloomy and hopeless existence of a Minnie Hanson, or the way to pleasures which has been called "the oldest profession." *Sister Carrie* decides to put her fate to the test and works for a short time at a shoe factory. The unbearable conditions make her suffer and accept Drouet's offer to become his lover. Baturin sees Carrie as a ruthless and manipulative woman, who tries to accommodate her
own wishes. As long as both her lovers provide material comforts, they suit Carrie. But the minute she understands that Hurstwood is no longer capable of sustaining the same level of convenience, "she mercilessly effaced him from her mind" (176).

*Sister Carrie*, thus, becomes a distinctive stage in the development of Dreiser's philosophical views: Carrie is depicted as a victim of the desire to strike success, a victim of the American dream of wealth and fame. Carrie's tragedy lies in the impossibility of achieving inner satisfaction after the outer success has been reached. Each new step up the social ladder takes away Carrie's friends and deprives her of sincerity and innocence. The "American dream" brings her to solitude and spiritual bankruptcy, and Baturin contends, this interpretation of the "American dream" contradicted the ingrained system of public opinion and directly challenged conventional bourgeois morals. To the critic's mind, such construal comprises another merit of the novel, "because it obviously demonstrates that the true tragedy of an American citizen lies in the irrepressible yearning for wealth and fame" (179).

On revealing the real America, the one he knew and grew in, Dreiser managed to create a novel of lasting artistic value. Baturin invites the reader to leaf through the pages of American newspapers and see for him/herself that the America Dreiser described is still very much alive, that nowadays it is possible to meet a great number of "Sister Carrie"s in any big American city, "contrary to the protestations of semi-official critics who in Introductions to *Sister Carrie* try to persuade the American public to the contrary" (190).

Sergei Ivanko's 1986 essay, *Theodore Dreiser*, in many instances appears to be as much ideologically charged as the critical pieces analyzed above. The main difference, though, is that Ivanko places his emphasis on
Dreiser-the newspaperman and the short-story writer rather than on Dreiser-the novelist. When the American author started to write *Sister Carrie*, he could not suspect that he was creating a novel classic and revolutionary in its nature. He was just describing the life he saw it, describing his relatives and acquaintances, simple American citizens, who were drawn into the struggle for wealth and happiness. And wealth and happiness in those years were synonyms. (13)

Going into the details of the novel's publishing history, the critic wonders what could have caused such a turmoil in readers' minds and produced so evident a disfavor of the author and his book. Notwithstanding the simple plot of the novel its inner philosophical content, professed by Dreiser, was radically different from the reigning (at that time) literary tradition of "genteel realism."

Ivanko identifies two main characters--Carrie and Hurstwood--in the novel. Carrie, who lacked the sense of inner and outer elegance of Jamesian characters, and the moral refinement of women-characters wrought by Hawthorne, differed from those characters not only by descent, but also by her life-outlook, including the inexhaustible yearning for pleasures and material welfare. Carrie's gullible egoism and the particularly prosaic nature of her actions were identified by many critics. The Soviet critic, analogous to many American scholars, believes that the novel was not recognized in the beginning because the main, "fallen" heroine, succeeded. Such an outcome "contradicted and challenged the deep-rooted American literary tradition of the 'happy end' " (19). In the "unhappy" ending of the novel Ivanko includes the incompatibility of the typical American dream--money, success--with simple human happiness. To the critic's mind, the author was firmly convinced and tried to convey that
money alone does not bring happiness; ultimately, his assertion was perceived as an action undermining the foundations of American society.

Ivanko points at another interesting feature of Dreiser's novels: their polyphonic nature, which is caused by the author's "double" identity—simultaneously he acts as an impartial observer and a biased participant of the described events. "This understanding of conformity to natural laws, of inner springs of the capitalist world—the world of hypocrisy and ready money, brutality, treachery and spiritual callousness—all this provided the opportunity for Dreiser to create the novels which never lose their urgency and convincing force"—Ivanko concludes (21).

Sergei Belov's article, The First Novel of Theodore Dreiser (1987), complements Baturin's and Ivanko's analyses of the author and his fiction. The critic is certain that Dreiser's first novel not only invites the reader to ponder the uneasy relationships among material success, social prestige and "simple human happiness," but also decisively encourages the reader to reconsider the values that have inspired the indigenous population and the vast numbers of newly arrived immigrants, those who expected to meet no racial, social and national prejudices in the "New World," the free land where their dreams were bound to come true. According to the Soviet scholar, Dreiser was one of the first American writers to notice the gradual development of the American dream into an "American tragedy," with the accent of a typical American utilitarianism, where the goal—profit—invariably justifies the means. As a matter of fact, in his novel Dreiser reopened the country anew not only to the American public, but to millions of readers outside the nation.

Borrowing facts from his family chronicles, the author needed them as an initial impulse for his novel. In Sister Carrie his characters not only act as individuals but are also social types. Behind social and psychological collisions
Dreiser sees the inexorable laws of social development, and behind the feelings of his characters the tension of social fervors. American individualism as a social phenomenon is the invisible character in the novel. When Carrie leaves home, she reappears in a world where natural human ties are broken and alienating powers are operable. These forces turn the alive, versatile individual into a faceless machine part, an adjunction to a conveyer system, or a commodity with market value. Thus, Carrie becomes an object of consumption and a marketable commodity for Drouet and Hurstwood; in her turn, Carrie is a bit of an "exploiter" herself, since she first uses men to suit her own ends, and then discards Hurstwood as being of no use.

A self-made man is a popular figure in American mythology, Belov reminds the reader. The critic then suggests that Hurstwood's character demonstrates the fragility and illusory nature of such success: when Hurstwood's social role (which became his essence) is taken away, the man is doomed. The events which lead him to the catastrophe may seem insignificant and random, but behind them the reader witnesses the social determination. Hurstwood-the-businessman commits a fatal error; another businessperson--his wife--takes the advantage over him and eliminates the competitor, winning a forty-thousand dollar prize. This episode, the critic stresses, is an obvious example of the classic thesis of The Communist Manifesto, which states that the bourgeoisie tears off the touchingly-sentimental cover of family relationships and reduces them to merely pecuniary relationships.

The past few years, which brought significant political changes to the former Soviet Union, caused many radical transformations in literary criticism, including Dreiser criticism. Formerly, Dreiser's creative work was examined mainly from a social standpoint, reflecting questions about the creation of his works, the representation of his life in them, his critique of modern social
conditions, etc. At the same time, the moral-ethical and psychological aspects of his writing were pushed outside the boundaries of criticism. As Elena Morozkina states in *Dreiser's Creative Work and Literary Development in the USA at the Turn of the Century*, "the studies of philosophico-aesthetical and morally-ethical problems of Dreiser's works help to deepen the analysis of the system of characters in his novels, significantly enlarge their interpretation, investigate the question of the evolution of Dreiser's outlook" (1994, 88). Thus, Morozkina's main goal is to examine the formation and development of Dreiser's aesthetic and ethical viewpoints, with special attention to the influences produced by Friedrich Nietzsche's, Arthur Schopenhauer's, and Herbert Spencer's philosophies. Morozkina studies *Sister Carrie* because the novel was created during the period of Dreiser's active interest in these thinkers. Dreiser was grappling with the categories of beauty and ugliness, eminence and truth, and with key questions of art—the place and role of an artist in society, the problems of the actor and the theater, the theme of genius. The critic underlines several times that Dreiser's philosophical system was eclectic: he never came up with new ideas or categories but preferred to choose the adaptable and adoptable ones.

The main postulates of Dreiser's philosophy are evident in his first novel; principles of contrast, expressed in the chapters' names as well as in the fates of the main characters, are also explicitly revealed in the contrast of illusion and reality. The characters in the novel live in the world of dreams and illusions, often losing their grip on reality. Drouet and Hurstwood, infatuated with Carrie, cannot read her indifference. Carrie dreams about the theater, which in *Sister Carrie* serves as a link between the dream (illusion) and reality. Theater is represented as a life-parody, because the life itself often looks like the theatrical stage. These two aspects are frequently mixed in the characters' conscience,
because each character in the novel acts. It is paradoxical that only Carrie does not act: she simply drifts along. Her success in the theater is achieved by her naturalness, not by her outstanding acting ability. Thus Carrie's behavior contrasts with those (non-actors) who have turned their everyday lives into acting on a theatrical stage. The author draws an unexpected conclusion: "if the most valuable thing in the theater is naturalness, then the best actor in real life wins" (46). On the other hand, the critic argues, Dreiser supposed that the person has to believe in the illusion. Without that belief, which protects one from cruel reality, the individual understands the theatricality of the surrounding world, tries to be natural, and disposes of numerous "societal" masks s/he has to wear. Hurstwood underwent a similar process: in the light of love for Carrie he was no longer willing to conform to societal rules and restrictions. But Morozkina sees his desire to free himself from society as self-destructive: "he was born and raised by that society, and consequently, absorbed all its vicious rules, primarily the one that identified money as the most important condition of human happiness" (48). When Hurstwood steals money from the safe, he is driven not so much by a passion for Carrie, but by the idée fixe of the omnipotence and power of wealth. His own society becomes a mighty force which mercilessly and methodically destroys Hurstwood.

Importantly, the critic notes, Dreiser tries to examine not only social but psychological motifs of the crime, employing methods of psychoanalysis. The psychological situation, when the character commits and simultaneously does not commit a crime, is unusual. Morozkina argues that the deep analysis of the psychological state of the character's mind and motifs to commit the crime let the author reject the obviously categorical recognition (by society) of the character's guilt and doubt the fairness of his incrimination.
Though Dreiser recognized that life was built according to rigid biological laws, in his novels he appealed to the best human qualities: charity, clemency, compassion. Finishing on the note of recognition of the influence of society on the formation of human characters, the critic stresses: "In depiction of the plot's conflicts and characters, behind the mystical power of life that governs people and circumstances, one can see quite real forces--nature, environment, society" (128).

Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* has been very popular in the former Soviet Union. It is still included in the curriculum presently offered in schools, making the novel readable and recognizable by many generations. It proved to be not only a "digestible" material for literary critics, who often blamed all the "vices" presented in the book on capitalist society, but common people--old and young--liked the novel also. Many of them could easily relate to the similar experience of coming to a big city, being scared and enchanted by it. Many people lived their lives under Minnie and her husband's conditions, so quite a number of them could understand Carrie's yearning for material wealth and success. For the reasons mentioned here and for many more not mentioned, citizens of the former Soviet Union know the name of Dreiser. If they have not read any of his novels, they might have seen a Soviet movie, *Sister Carrie*, or listened to a musical under the same title. The movie and the musical are other proofs of the lasting interest of the ex-Soviet peoples in the novel and its author.
CHAPTER 3
NOTABLE ELEMENTS IN THE TRANSLATION
OF SISTER CARRIE INTO RUSSIAN

Etymologically, translation means "carrying across." Hence, the translator's work suggests the possibility of relocation, displacement and defamiliarization, which are intrinsic to the process itself. The work of the translator has been described in different periods and cultures as "craft," "practice," "science," or "art." Accordingly, translation has been defined as "manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose" (Theo Hermans, 1985, 11), as "rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language text (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two would be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted" (Susan Bassnett, 1980, 2). Lawrence Venuti perceives translation as an inevitably and inherently violent act, residing in the activity of translation, which is "the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language reader. ...The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar" (1995, 18). So, which is it: the violent manipulation of the source text or the manipulative violence played upon the target text?

As Mikhail Bakhtin said in Discourse in the Novel, that "of all words uttered in everyday life, no less than half belong to someone else" (782). Definitely, the translator works with words written by the author, but within the text they are spoken by characters, narrators, the implied author and so forth.
The author's cultural, ideological and societal conventions and rules influence and color the outcome of his/her creative work. The death of the author has been proclaimed by Roland Barthes--does that mean that the translator translates nobody's text? Prominent representatives of the poststructuralist school, Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man, questioned the concepts of originality and authorship in *Difference in Translation* and *The Resistance to Theory*. Their belief is that the originality of the foreign text lies not so much with the coherent expression of the author's meaning, but with its propensity to live what Walter Benjamin calls the "afterlife" in a derivative form like translation: "Translations that are more than transmissions of subject matter come into being when in the course of its survival a work has reached the age of its fame. ... The life of the originals attains in them to its ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering" (quoted in Venuti, 1992, 7).

Gayatri Spivak states that translation is "the most intimate act of reading" (1993, 183). When the translator surrenders to the text, the situation is "more erotic than ethical," because Spivak understands the translator's relationship with the original language as such that s/he chooses or prefers to speak in it about intimate things and matters (1993, 183, 187). Rachel May expresses the idea of translation as a process of reconstruction of the work "at all levels, from bottom to top and from top to bottom" (1994, 1).

Roman Jakobson views translation as communication in the widest sense. In *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* he identifies three types of translation: intralingual, or rewording (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language); interlingual, or translation proper (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language); and intersemiotic translation, or transmutation (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems, which is translation of verbal
language into music, gesture, game, sculpture and painting, mathematic systems). (1959, 232) Jakobson also points to the common central problem for all types, which is the absence of full equivalence (in the sense of synonymy or sameness) through translation. Moreover, as complete equivalence is impossible, all poetic art is technically untranslatable: "Only creative transportation is possible: either intralingual transportation--from one poetic shape into another, or interlingual transportation--from one language into another, or finally intersemiotic transportation--from one system of signs into another, e.g. from verbal art into music, dance, cinema or painting" (1959, 239).

If translation as an act and process of communication is equaled with love-violence relationship (not necessarily a happy marriage), what is the representation of the translator? Spivak sees the relationship between the original text and translation in gender terms: to her, the original text is always male and the translator female. To Venuti, the translator is a "paradoxical hybrid, at once dilettante and artisan," who is also "the agent of a cultural practice that is conducted under continuous self-monitoring and often with active consultation of cultural rules and resources, ranging from dictionaries and grammars to other texts, discursive strategies, and translations, both canonical and marginal" (1992, 1, 11). May compares the translator to an orchestra conductor, "who brings out the various voices in a work to best advantage," and "becomes a creative contributor to the larger cultural phenomenon of text plus translations, part of what Benjamin calls the 'afterlife' of the work" (86, 87).

Any translator--skillful and experienced or otherwise--consciously or unconsciously selects a method for translation. The choice of methods was vividly described by Friedrich Schleiermacher, German theologian and philosopher, in 1813. Schleiermacher argued that "there are only two
[methods]. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (quoted in Venuti, 1995, 19). Basically the choice is between the domesticating method (bringing the author back home), or the foreignizing method (sending the reader abroad).

The end result of the method of domestication or transparency produces a text that flows effortlessly in the target language, effacing all reality of the other (source) language. "A translated text is judged successful--by most editors, publishers, reviewers, readers, by translators themselves--when it reads fluently, when it gives the appearance that it is not translated, that it is the original, transparently reflecting the foreign author's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti, 1992, 4). A translator who engages in the method of domestication also practices self-effacement, invisibility, and, as Venuti calls it, "a vanishing act," or "self-annihilation," when the translator's presence is concealed by the valorization of transparency. Intervention in the text--the attempt to adjust (rewrite) the foreign text to new cultural and linguistic surroundings--is carefully hidden behind the fluent strategy, which is easily recognized, as it takes characteristic forms. Venuti identifies them as those that possess linear syntax, current lexical usage, univocal meaning and controlled ambiguity.

They eschew unidiomatic constructions, polysemy, archaism, jargon, abrupt shifts in tone or diction, pronounced rhythmic regularity or sound repetitions--any textual effect, any play of the signifier, which calls attention to the materiality of language, to words as words, their opacity, their resistance to emphatic response and interpretive mastery. (Venuti, 1992, 4)
Thus, the rewritten text is alive with target-language social values, beliefs, differences, creating the effect of familiarity of scenes and representations. The translated text is acculturated under the fluent strategy; the text becomes readable, marketable and consumable, providing the target-language reader with the "narcissistic experience of recognizing his or her own culture in a cultural other, enacting an imperialism that extends the dominion of transparency with other ideological discourses over a different culture" (Venuti, 1992, 5).

Fluent domestication has been prevalent in Anglo-American culture for many years, fostering the illusion (myth) of universal "sameness" in a predominantly monolingual society. Besides the danger of reducing individual author's styles and manners to a plain uniformed prose, it also cultivates the notion that the choice of a text for translation is predetermined by its receptivity to fluent (or transparent) translation.

Philip Lewis, who translated works by Jacques Derrida, coined the term "abusive fidelity" in translation. He investigates a more sophisticated translation strategy that acknowledges the explorations of poststructuralists in terms of meaning as a differential plurality which is never stable but always differential and deferred, being an endless play of the chain of signifiers. As a result, "a foreign text is a set of different semantic possibilities that are fixed only provisionally in any one translation, on the basis of varying cultural assumptions and interpretive choices, in specific social situations, in different historical periods" (Venuti, 1995, 18). This statement echoes Bakhtin's warning that "the speech of another, once enclosed in a context, is--no matter how accurately transmitted--always subject to certain semantic changes" (782).

By "abusive fidelity" Lewis means defamiliarization and production of "the strong, forceful translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage,
seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (quoted in May, 8). It coincides with the foreignizing method of translation, which signifies the linguistic and cultural difference of a foreign text by disruption and deviation from native norms of the target (receptor) language. Venuti labeled it as an "ethnodeviant pressure" on target-language cultural values. While domestication stresses fluency, foreignization rejects it. The text in the source language, demonstrating resistance to dominant cultural values, has to be reproduced by the translator by a text that resists dominant cultural values in the target language. The result of employing resistant translation strategies is "an extremely discontinuous textuality in which the translator inventively joins in the production of meaning, undermining conventional representations that not only subordinate translator to author, but also metaphorize authorship as male and translation as female" (Venuti, 1992, 12). This strategy not only brings visibility to the translator's work, but also helps to maintain the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text by producing estranging and defamiliarizing translations.

Recognizing the difficulties in production of a good translation, many theorists of translation note the importance of translation for any culture. Translation is identified as a means (or vehicle) by which culture travels; it is perceived as cultural extension and presentation of national identities to foreign cultures. It is important to recognize the ideological implications of translation practice: the translator always brings to the text a set of cultural assumptions about the text, about his/her own role, and about language, literature and its readers.

Every society should analyze the number of present translated works to trace not only the quality of their translation, but also to question their very existence with the aim to answer who gets translated in the given society and
why. Those answers would shape better understanding of the past, because any translation reflects a cluster of cultural, linguistic and political forces that cast it. The driving motives for selection of texts to be translated are to be recognized and examined, for they instinctively respond to and directly influence (dictate) the state of ideological health of the society. Bakhtin, talking about the means of speech transmission, speaking persons and others' words, notes that "The ideological becoming of a human being ... is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (783).

The Soviet school of translation was built on a solid foundation of artistic traditions that began in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. During the reign of Peter the Great Russia entered the period of significant reforms aimed at Westernization of the empire. Translation was perceived as a leading medium to bring the West to Russia, and therefore was granted official status. To many poets and writers translation became a legitimate activity which was treated as a high art.

The Soviet school of translation came into existence in the 1920s as a natural outcome of the old tradition on the one hand and the implementation of the new nationalities policy of the Soviet Union on the other. Vladimir Lenin saw translation as a cementing ingredient to the newly emerged multinational state with more than a hundred different languages and various ethnic groups. He personally supported Maxim Gorky's World Literature Publishing House (founded in 1918, almost immediately after the revolution), which brought together many famous and highly talented translators from the old "academic" school--people like A. N. Veselovsky and F. D. Batyushkov, who worked on translation of foreign classics--and writers who aimed at the propagandization of literatures written by the peoples of the Union. The task of the World Literature Publishing House was to bring the greatest attainments of world
classics to the masses of revolutionary Russia. The requirement was clear: translations had to be scientifically prepared and highly artistic. In order to fulfill it, Gorky demanded from translators substantial knowledge about the original author, the literature of the country, and the historic period.

The aim of Gorky's World Literature was also to financially support and morally encourage writers and make sure that previously existing (or newly established) cultural contacts among the peoples of the Union and with the world would be maintained. Gorky assigned a difficult national task: "to assemble, to analyze, and to evaluate all existing translations of world literature and to determine which were worth preserving and which should be done anew" (Leighton, 7). This was a gigantically ambitious chore which Worldlit did not fully accomplish by the time it closed in 1927. Nevertheless, it produced 120 single and multivolume editions of outstanding world writers and laid the groundwork for the performance of such publishing enterprises as Gosudarstvennaya Literatura (State Literature), Khudozhestvennaya Literatura (Artistic Literature), and Inostrannaya Literatura (Foreign Literature).

Korney Chukovsky, a renowned translator from English, was given by Gorky a difficult assignment: to come up with a manual that would cover many problems of the practice of translation. At that point there existed no book-length study in any world literature in the field. The task was fulfilled, and in 1918 appeared a small in-house manual under the title of Printsipy Perevoda (Principles of Translation). After many subsequent publications (which extended and significantly advanced the initial manual) Principles grew into what is known nowadays as "the Bible of the Soviet school"—Chukovsky's A High Art.

The Soviet school of translation has always had a very sensitive and attentive national audience. Principles, problems, methods, approaches and assumptions of the profession are discussed and debated on the all-Union level
through such annual collections as *Masterstvo Perevoda* (The Craft of Translation) and *Tetradi Perevodchika* (Translator’s Notebooks). Such leading publications as a monthly magazine *Inostrannaya Literature* (Foreign Literature) and a weekly newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literary Gazette) do not ignore the problems of translation and its studies. Frequent forums, debates, and discussions helped to work out the terminology appropriate for translation criticism and methodology of translation. There are many types of translation defined by the Soviet school, which in many aspects coincide with the commonly described types in the West: *massoviy* (popular) translation, *akademicheskiy* (academic or scholarly), *semanticheskiy* (semantic), *volniy* (free), *nauchniy* (scientific), *tochniy* (precise), etc. The Soviet school takes pride in inventing a type of translation called artistic, which is adequate, full-valued and equivalent to its original in form, style, and content, as well as in practical principles for dealing with the permutations among these basis qualities of a literary work. It is founded on a respect that impels translators to learn everything they can about the original text, its author, its cultural and temporal context, and its place in world literature. (Leighton, 68)

Soviet artistic translation is a high ideal of a high art founded on understanding that the translator is a creative artist and the original text is sacred. Therefore the professional demands and expectations placed on the translator are unusually high. Translators have to be fully (the best possible command of languages) bilingual and able to convey a foreign work into the native language. The love for one's own language is a must for the adequate (text-oriented) and full-valued (reader-oriented) translation. In addition, translators have to know stylistics, geography, history, literature, philosophy, social science, etc. In short, translators have to know everything and be experts on almost any subject.
Many famous Soviet translators wrote books on the countries of their foreign languages—scholarly studies, literary biographies, histories—and in many cases are poets and writers themselves.

The Soviet school has always demonstrated a remarkably close connection between theory and practice which resulted in establishing the right vocabulary, effective methodology, and high standards for artistic translation. As Lauren Leighton notes, the school is optimistic in the assumption that all problems have solutions, and they approach the problem of untranslatibility with greater certitude than their American colleagues. "This has enabled them to acknowledge the reality of the language barrier, put the question itself behind, and concentrate attention where it belongs: on what should be done to convey a literary work from one language to another as faithfully as language permits" (Leighton, 12).

Soviet translators' duties included also the mission of a propagandist, who propagates friendship among peoples and unites them by producing major works not only by foreign authors, but by representatives of all nationalities and languages of the Soviet Union. Many members of the school envisioned translation as not only an artistic act but a political as well. Levon Mkrtchian, an Armenian critic, states that "the translator always takes part in the socio-political life of the country. In the modern world a translation can even be a powerful factor on behalf of the progress, and a weapon in the struggle for progress" (quoted in Leighton, 35).

Soviet authorities, paying much attention to what was said and written in Soviet literature, oftentimes were oblivious to the state of things in the realm of translation. One cannot say that the field was free to choose and act as it pleased, or that it was not affected by political censorship. Leighton cleverly suggests that "Like bureaucrats everywhere, Soviet authorities can be
complacently monolingual: what is said in another language does not exist, and
even when it is translated it may not be deemed important" (38). There is some
truth to this assumption about the lesser censorship for translated works. My
guess, though, is that the whole country was filled with so many small and big
"responsible" committees checking the moral and ideological aspects of things
(of different companies, publishing houses, editors, writers, individuals, etc.) that
each grown-up citizen had developed his/her own mental (political) self-
censorship in fear of doing something "prohibited" or "illegitimate." Because of
this fear there existed the so-called "dissertationable" and "undissertationable"
topics in literature. The most convenient way to address the author (when one
had to study literature and write a thesis or dissertation) was when the author
was safely dead and could not come up with some negative remarks or
observations on the Soviet Union. If that author counted as a "friend" of the
Soviet Union, s/he was questionable also, because in any given time s/he could
be brainwashed by capitalist propaganda and change his/her outlook and
political allegiance. For instance, J. P. Sartre and Robert Penn Warren quickly
became persona non grata when they dared to say something unpleasant
about the Soviet Union. Although in general it is right that translators were
subjected to less rigid ideological control than original writers.

My own approach in this chapter is to look at the actual translation of
Sister Carrie, turning from criticism and theory to the actual practice of a well-
known Soviet literary translator, Mikhail Volosov. By putting the translation next
to its original I will be looking for clues to cultural, political, linguistic and
ideological forces that helped to shape the translation.

The popularity of Dreiser in the former Soviet Union is a well-known
phenomenon. Copies of his works are available in numerous translations; a
version of Sister Carrie has been put to music by a Latvian composer, Reimond
Paulus; Konstantin Stanislavsky planned to stage Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, and a copy of *Sister Carrie* traveled to the North Pole with Russian discoverers. Volosov's translation of *Sister Carrie*, which first appeared in 1927, is the only known translation into Russian.

Dreiser himself recognized that his style was sloppy and awkward, but I doubt that he would have changed anything if he had been told that his style complicated the translator's job. When an English and a Russian version are juxtaposed, the first visual impression is the presence of more frequent and shorter paragraphs in the Russian text. May argues that "punctuation appears to be a locus of translational control, the place where translators assert the most authority" (6). Volosov translates the first sentence of the first chapter omitting nothing but making it into the opening paragraph of the book. Thus, from the very start he tries to "smooth" over the style of the novel, to introduce some breaks and pauses which are not present in the original text.

The second sentence of the same chapter opens a second paragraph in the Russian text. The translator surprisingly leaves out the month of the year, though Dreiser clearly states: "It was in August, 1889" (*SC*, 1). The sentence is so simple and translatable that it seems hard to understand the translator's motives until a similar case shows up in the text again. In the same chapter, when the narrator describes the emergence of the new slang word "masher," he pinpoints the time when it came into use: "... sprung into general use among Americans in 1880" (3). It seems that the definite date is hard to avoid in any style of translation, but in this case Volosov comes up with the following (simultaneously being elusive about the country where the novel takes place): "... a more recent word, which was generally recognized [literally--granted citizenship rights] in the end of the nineteenth century." (*R SC*, 65) Even more astonishing evidence of avoidance of dates is presented during the description
of the city: "In 1889 Chicago had the peculiar qualifications of growth..." (SC, 12). The translator finds an approximation: "In those years Chicago had all the peculiarities [features] of a fast growing city ..." (R SC, 75). The relevant question is why the translator is shunning dates; what can be his reason for this strange behavior? My suggestion is that it is important to keep in mind the political moment of translation of the novel. It happened in 1927, exactly ten years after the October revolution. The Soviet Union was the first and only socialist country, very much striving to survive and prove to the rest of the world the erroneous nature of capitalism. Dreiser's novel was a perfect choice for translation, because it was a testimony of social injustice, a social document, an account of life in the United States produced by one of its citizens. To leave an impression that nothing has changed in America, that things will continue to be the way they were described in the novel, that capitalism has no future--only an unidentifiable past--seemingly, the translator was manipulating the text with these goals in mind.

The introductory description of Carrie is broken into two sentences with a little paraphrased addition. Instead of "She was eighteen years of age, bright, timid, and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth" (1), the Russian text says: "Caroline has just turned eighteen. She was a bright girl, but timid, full of illusions typical of ignorance and youth" (63). The manner of translation changes Dreiser's priorities and the intonation and rhythm of the original sentence. Volosov emphasizes Carrie's youth and inexperience by breaking down the flow of adjectives in predicative position and by introducing an opposition--"bright, but timid," which also hints at Carrie's lack of worldly experience.

Volosov slightly manipulates the syntactical and lexical units of the text to convey a delicately refashioned version of Carrie and other characters and their
relationships. For instance, Dreiser's sentence "To be sure, there was always the next station, where one might descend and return" (1) in the translation literally reads "To be sure, she could descend at the nearest station and return home." The word "home" is inserted here because the Russian language often requires a strong sense of place, but the lexical replacement of "next" for "nearest" ties "the nearest station" with "home" by strong semantic ties, implying more attachment to home than Carrie ever displays in the novel.

The translator reads Carrie as a typical representative of her class and wants his readers to have a similar impression. That is why Dreiser's "... she was a fair example of the middle American class--two generations removed from the emigrant" (2) becomes "... a fair example of the American woman of the middle class whose not only parents but great-grandparents lived in America." "The American woman" has to be specified due to linguistic peculiarities of Russian language, i.e. the presence of gender system. "Great-grandparents" in this context sounds more emphatic than a plain "two generations." Besides, the word "emigrant" is totally removed from the text. My presumption is that in 1927, when the text was translated, all efforts were bent on consolidating the country and accelerating its post-revolution and post-Civil war reconstruction. The country's memory of the great number of people who emigrated after the revolution of 1917 was still so fresh that the choice of words might have been dictated (or, rather, influenced) by political considerations. On the other hand, the Russian mentality would not necessarily consider that two generations are quite enough for developing a strong sense of middle class beliefs, so the translator was "domesticating" the text, making it intelligent and recognizable for its readers.

To my great surprise, I found that the translator frequently not only divided one long sentence in two or sometimes three (which can be explained
by the peculiarities of conveying certain structures into another language), but
that he also felt free to add or delete words, phrases, parts of sentences, whole
sentences and even sentence-clusters. This contradicts the method of artistic
translation, which values greatly the unity of the original text. It also runs counter
to the beliefs of Soviet translation theorists who devoted much attention to all
aspects of style, intonation in particular. Stylistically, intonation is derived from
an assortment of different elements, such as syntactic structure, rhythm—pauses,
stops, rises and falls, etc.—tone, and stress. Leighton argues that intonation "is
the most sensitive instrument for conveying the impact of a style and thus a
meaning of a work, the author's world view, and even the national character of
the author's literature" (99). By cutting sentences in half, combining them,
breaking the original paragraphs into sub-paragraphs, inserting new parts of
sentences or omitting existing ones, the translator redefines the work from
above, replacing a narrative voice with a more authoritative one, reevaluating
the author's words as his own and asserting a semblance of authorship over the
text.

To explain my point, I will address the scene when Drouet and Carrie
become acquainted. The English version says: "He had been fidgeting, and
with natural intuition she felt a certain interest growing in that quarter" (2). The
Russian version, when translated word by word, sounds like this: "Instinctively,
Carrie understood that [she] had interested him." "Natural intuition" is replaced
by a dry "instinct"—is it a tribute to Dreiser's "dark" naturalism? The first part of
the sentence is completely missing, the other is leveled and smoothed, to
correspond (more or less) to proper Russian grammar and norms of behavior.
This is a case of evident acculturation of the text by using fluent translation.
Another evidence of it is the translator's desire to avoid slang, to erase it as if it
does not exist in the original work. For instance, when Drouet says "The hotels are swell" Volosov does not hear him, rushing to translate the next sentence.

In a successful attempt to deliver a slightly "better" Drouet to the Russian reader, Volosov adds a descriptive epithet "large" to the sentence "He was a type of the traveling canvasser for a [large] manufacturing house," augmenting Drouet's importance and elevating him in Carrie's eyes. In another instance the translator makes Drouet look more decent, when instead of English "vulnerable object" (for Drouet to prey upon) he comes up with a "fitting object." So, according to the Russian text, Drouet was not looking for "vulnerable objects" (such as Carrie, for example), but he was picking only "fitting" ones. This evident correction of Drouet's manner continues when the drummer, in an effort to impress Hurstwood, tells the latter about his little adventure on the way to Chicago and calls Carrie "a little peach." Volosov substitutes it by a "charming girl," taking out the slang and undue familiarity of the character.

When analyzed, the Russian translation presents a battle site between two forces acting upon it. The first force is the internal struggle between the narrator and translator for control of the text's language; the second is the outer force, the conflicting cultural attitudes toward narrative style in the original and receptor languages. The politics of style are closely connected with the adopted policy of language by the Communist party. Vladimir Lenin actively advocated usage of Russian literary language, against foreign words that were "perverting" the Russian speech. Maxim Gorky wrote in 1933: "We should demand from each word maximum effectiveness, maximum inspirational power. We will achieve that only when we develop a respect for language as our material, when we learn to shuck off its empty hull, when we cease to distort words and make them incomprehensible and deformed" (quoted in May, 61). In the 1930s and 1940s there was a movement away from popular and folk language, when
folk elements, and colloquial speech were unacceptable in literature. Basically, instead of literary language it propagated a neutral style. This prevalence of a neutral layer of lexicon is evident in the Russian translation of Sister Carrie as well.

There are several instances in the text (chapters VI, XI, XIII, to enumerate just a few) when words are italicized to capture the reader's attention and make them more emphatic by placing an additional stress on them, which certainly disrupts the even flow of narration. The Russian text is devoid of any disruptions: the italics are absent. Furthermore, when the original conveys the accented speech of a German bar owner in New York (i.e., Ch. XXXIV) the Russian text produces the same bar owner speaking non-accented Russian, though it would have been fairly easy for the translator to imitate the German accent. Other vivid instances of neutralizing the speech of characters are found in chapters III, VI, VII, XL. Dreiser, when describing the shop girls, says: "They ... were rich in curiosity, and strong in daring and slang" (SC, 19). Volosov erases "strong in daring and slang," and leaves what can be literally translated as "the curiosity was welling out of them" (R SC, 83). Certainly, the girls' behavior is modified--they look innocent, but extremely curious, which is not a sin--and the general impression is more favorable. It also shows that the translator disliked the author's choice of the word "common" when the machine girls were described. When the narrator states: "They seemed satisfied with their lot, and were in a sense 'common,' " (SC, 42) the translator disregards the second constituent of the sentence and generates "They seemed satisfied with their lot." Volosov resorts to the same trick when Carrie buys herself a pretty umbrella after the first rain in the city and her sister considers it a waste of money. Carrie assures herself that "She was not going to be a common shop-girl" (SC, 43). The Russian text yields: "They shouldn't think that a shop-girl would be content
with rags!" This text makes quite a different implication, emphasizing Carrie's desire for nice things and her constant dissatisfaction with her lot.

The translator exercises authorial power when he attempts to trim down Dreiser's style by means of frequent omissions or erasure of parts of sentences or whole sentences. When Drouet's narrated monologue states: "She was not like the common run of store-girls. She wasn't silly," (SC, 54) the translator faces the word "common" again. This time Volosov resorts not only to combining both sentences, but also to substitution and addition when he writes: "She did not resemble usual store-girls, who only recently arrived from little provincial towns: she was far from being silly" (RSC, 122). This way the "usual" store girls are, as a rule, from little provincial towns and silly. "Usual" is, of course, a synonym for "common," but no synonyms can be completely interchangeable and have the same connotation. In Russian, "usual" is more neutral than "common"; thus the translator's intention to neutralize the speech and manners of the characters is apparent.

When Dreiser describes the strike of tram workers in New York, the translator confronts a precarious situation: first of all, he must truthfully convey the form and content of the novel, and second, he needs to make sure that the content conforms to political beliefs of the Soviet government. To do so, Volosov manipulates the text. When Hurstwood recognizes that he does not sympathize with the corporations, "but strength was with them. So was property and public utility," the translator (unexpectedly) informs the reader: "... but strength was with them. Besides, the residents need cars." This is an example of the so-called "free" translation, or, as Russian translation theorists call it, "concoctions," when the author conveys a very distant approximation of the original.

Volosov's biased attitude manifests itself when instead of "small and wooden" houses of the strikers he produces "small and wretched," as if implicitly
naming more reasons for their strike and additionally dramatizing the whole episode. When the narrator says, "Labor was having its little war," the Russian text omits the somewhat diminishing "little" and clearly identifies the action together with the introduction of the deictic "here": "The workers were having their war here." The use of deixis, which orients the speaker in time and place with respect to the audience and the action is the most obvious sign of the narrator's world view. When used in third person narration (which is the case with Sister Carrie), such expressions as "here," "now," "today," pinpoint the narrator as present at the scene. The effect on the reader is not the identification with strikers, but deep sympathy for their plight. To portray the strikers in a "politically correct" light, Volosov purifies their actions and jettisons a significant part of the sentence: "About certain corners and nearby saloons small groups of men were lounging" (SC, 316). Definitely, "lounging" is devoid of any activity, and in conjunction with "saloons" conjures up the picture which Volosov tries to evade. Thus, the Russian reader gets: "At cross-roads there were [standing] some small groups."

The disparity between the two cultures—the source and the target—is pronounced in the translator's temptation to remove the number of rooms in various apartments where Carrie lived. For example, the New York's flat with "six rooms and a bath, running in a straight line," is qualified as "a tiny flat with a bath." I am sure that the choice of words was not dictated by the Russian superior sense of space, but conversely, by the then present living conditions of the majority of the population. As Dreiser recalls in his Russian Diary after a visit to the new workers' flats, "... in each room dwell from two to seven people—making for each apartment (of three rooms) an average of 10 to 15 people" (90). His friend, a young Russian critic Sergei Dinamov, lived in better conditions: "He had three small rooms in a shabby frame building, and there were four
members of his family" (88). The translator reduced the number of rooms in Chicago and New York apartments to make it intelligible for the reader, thus domesticating the text.

The Russian text shows more affection and attachment in the Carrie-Hurstwood relationship. This is achieved by manipulating the verbs "like" and "love" in the text. For instance, when Hurstwood thinks, "she likes me all right," the Russian version says: "She loves me." "Don't you care for me at all?" (SC, 218) is literally translated as "Don't you love me at all?" When Hurstwood confesses: "I wanted you too much," (SC, 218) the Russian Carrie hears "I love you too much." Simultaneously, Hurstwood (in the Russian text) shifts from the past tense into the present, indicating that his love is still very much alive.

When Carrie becomes dissatisfied with Hurstwood and "began to look upon Hurstwood wholly as a man, and not as a lover or husband," the moral norms, seemingly, intervened in the Russian text and the translation says: "She began to look upon Hurstwood as not a lover, but a real husband." Unquestionably, "the great and mighty Russian language" (as described by Leo Tolstoy) has all the means to convey the semantic difference of nouns, but the translator chooses the language which obscures the possibility of anything other than assumption of a wifely duty for Carrie.

As I have already mentioned, the Russian text presents a dramatic battlefield between attempts to domesticate the novel and foreignize it. The translator maintains the English measure of distance, the mile, and does not convert it into the metric system. On the other hand, when Drouet suggests taking a car, the translator identifies it as a "cab" (which is very foreign and somewhat archaic), not as a "taxi," which is neutral. When the word "militia" is used by Dreiser, it is interpreted as "police," not by its closest synonym, which is "militsia" in Russian. "Police" was used in tzarist times to denote a repressive
organ of power. At the time of the translation the word had both connotations—archaic and foreign, which definitely helped to maintain the aura of foreignness.

In many instances Volosov's rearrangements are a simple matter of Russian usage. Russians do not say "I haven't seen you for six weeks." They would say "I haven't seen you for a month and a half." The word "dozen" is almost obsolete in the language, so "dozen times" is translated as "ten times," and "half a dozen" as "five times." The exclamation "by God" usually denotes a highly religious person, so such instances in the text are translated as a more emphatic "damn it." As a rule, the translation is less saturated with superfluous language than the original. "An earlier exodus this year of people" is neutralized by a simple construction "the public started to leave early this year."

Sometimes Volosov appears to substitute too readily. Where Dreiser has "millionaires," Volosov has "large capitalists," though there is a noun "millioner" in the language. Dreiser's "showy crush" has been modified to read "a thick throng." The statement "you are not happy" is converted into "you are not lucky," while "error" turns into "deed," or the semblance of "action."

Whenever possible, the translator tries to approximate morphological similarities, as in "clatter and clang"—"grokhotigul."

In general, Volosov's temptation to "authorize" the text, to improve it visually as well as stylistically, to remove redundancies, repetitions, fillers and superfluous language leads to an almost complete leveling of narrative style. I do believe that the time has come for a new, more modern translation, one that would fully correspond to the artistic method of translation. Russian theorists agree that the work of art is immortal, while translation lasts only for its generation.

Less than half a decade ago the Soviet Union underwent radical political changes and from a thriving communistic country turned into many
countries of developing free-market economies. This could not but influence ideological, cultural and economic conditions, as well as the mentality of the whole population. Many translations of popular works by foreign authors, including Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie*, are no longer ideologically suitable because social values and beliefs are different now. The new historic period has brought different cultural assumptions and, consequently, new interpretive choices.

The translator nowadays is fully equipped with achievements of the ex-Soviet school of translation and does not need to shy away from the necessity to translate actual dates. The reader is more knowledgeable and more culturally aware, cognizant of different cultures and life-styles. The society ceases to be patriarchal, and the woman’s role is changing: there are more and more women in traditional male professions, such as business, economics, management, etc. The desire to make it on one’s own, to become successful and independent, is recognizable by many people. The city with its magnetic attraction claims new and better educated residents. Thus, the altered societal values and beliefs push for a new translation of *Sister Carrie*, one which will be attuned to the needs and requirements of the generation of the 90s.


