

## AIRMAIL INTERVIEW

W.A. SWANBERG

W.A. Swanberg was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1907; he received his B.A. at the University of Minnesota in 1930. Since then he has held diverse jobs in various places--serving as an editor at the Dell Publishing Co. in the 30's, as a writer for the U.S. Office of War Information in Europe during the 40's and as a freelance writer since 1945. His writings include articles for *True*, *Yankee*, *The New Yorker*, *Life*, and *American Heritage* magazines. He is also the author of *Sickles the Incredible* (Scribner, 1956), *First Blood* (Scribner, 1957), *Jim Fisk* (Scribner, 1959), *Citizen Hearst* (Scribner, 1961), and *Dreiser* (Scribner, 1965).



Reviewing *Dreiser* in *Library Journal*, Allan Angoff wrote: "This will unquestionably remain the definitive biography of the major novelist whose realism shocked America in the early years of the century. . . . Mr. Swanberg's prodigious research has sent him to the most obscure sources, to thousands of letters, and to scores of men and women who knew Dreiser, and with this massive detail he has constructed a fascinating story. He is a sympathetic biographer, but he does not overlook Dreiser's confusion, superstition, bigotry, egomania, ingratitude, his marriages, and his simultaneous love affairs."

The editors reached Mr. Swanberg at his home in Connecticut, and he graciously agreed to answer a dozen or so questions by mail submitted by our contributing editors. The results follow. "Right now," adds Swanberg, "I'm working on a biography of Henry R. Luce --almost as hard-shelled a character as TD."

*What do you think is Dreiser's literary reputation today, and is it deserved? What do you think his ultimate importance will be?*

I can't comment on TD's literary reputation today--am not well read on current criticism. But about his "ultimate importance" I'd think him to be at the very least a great pioneer and pathfinder.

*Since Dreiser was obviously interested in the little man and social abuse, why did he never attempt a proletarian novel? Why was he so consistently drawn to the American Tragedy type of story?*

I don't suppose it's necessary for a novelist to write proletarian novels to show his interest in "the little man and social abuses." He can show this interest by dramatizing the trials and temptations of a "little person" in the toils of an inequitable

# THE DREISER NEWSLETTER

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## FOREWORD

It seems proper that *The Dreiser Newsletter* should emanate from the English Department in Indiana State University's Dreiser Hall in the town where Theodore Dreiser was born on 27 August 1871. We intend to publish the *Newsletter* biannually--in the Spring and Fall--but the issue you are now reading deserves special attention. It represents about a year's worth of work, cooperation and enthusiasm. We should especially like to thank Professor George Smock, Chairman of the Department here at ISU, for encouraging the *Newsletter* from the outset. And we wish to thank our splendid Contributing Editors, listed on your left, for helping us to put together a publication that we believe serves not only as a reminder of the past year's work, but as a criterion for the future. Thanks so much.

--The Editors

## THE DREISER CENTENNIAL

Although plans are still nebulous for the celebration of Dreiser's birth in Terre Haute, Indiana, it has been *tentatively* agreed that a workshop will take place from Monday, August 9, 1971, through the 20th. We hope to have as many friends and relatives of Dreiser as we can get to come to Terre Haute, along with as many established Dreiser scholars as will agree to participate. Readers of this publication are asked to suggest participants, including themselves, but the final decision will rest with the Terre Haute Centennial Committee.

The *Newsletter* hopes to publicize, and, if possible, to co-operate in other ways in making celebrations of Dreiser's birth in his beloved New York, as well as other cities and towns, a success. Just tell us what you want us to do.

--The Editors

system, as Dreiser did indeed with Clyde in *An American Tragedy* and with Carrie in *Sister Carrie*, to name only two. Offhand I can't think of any of TD's writings, long or short, in which he failed to show or suggest social abuses. They were on his mind continually.

*Your book frequently suggests that you would agree that Dreiser was an inconsistent mechanist, or as Trilling states, that his pity for humanity was essentially self-pity. Would this be an accurate generalization?*

To be sure, TD was an inconsistent mechanist. I think his violent break with the church was less a break with religion per se than with what he regarded as mistaken and venal interpretations of religion. Nor should any real mechanist be as superstitious as TD was. I suspect that a part of his malaise was caused by his inability to reconcile his cynicism and mechanism with his really unsurpassed emotional feeling about the mysteries of creation. He was rather angry at God for not letting him in on all the secrets. Some of his poetry is moving in its revelation of the intensity with which he yearned for answers to the impenetrable mysteries. Whether or not his pity for humanity was really self-pity, he did at any rate extend his pity beyond himself and over all of humanity.

*In what way(s), if any, did your research surprise you or cause you to change your image of Dreiser?*

I was surprised at the extent to which TD concerned himself with social problems; devoting to these problems a huge amount of time and effort (and a good bit of his own money) which subtracted from the time and effort he spent on writing. It raises the question of whether he might have produced another great novel or two if he had concentrated on that. Then there was his womanizing--that is, the technique he employed. His technique was less in the heroic or Byronic style than in the use of back-street stealth and deceit. The reason for this never involved any fear or respect for bourgeois morality but was simply a practical realization that he derived real benefit--whether it was shirt laundering, affection, stenography or criticism--from the women who ran his domicile (among them Jug, Kirah, and Helen) and that he might lose this valued aid unless he "went underground" in his other affairs.

*Why did Dreiser constantly "betray" close friends, both male and female--break with men like Arthur Henry, Hy Kraft, Grant Richards, Harold Hershey, and even William Lengel to an extent? We do not mean what were the given reasons for his break with these friends; rather, what psychological reasons (if any) brought about, almost by necessity, Dreiser's inability to trust people, and to take out his distrust on those closest to him?*

It is reasonable to believe that the terrible poverty and humiliation of his childhood caused or contributed to his attitude or suspicion toward the world and toward his friends. To these

humiliations were added the social and literary frustrations that continued until the huge success of *An American Tragedy* when he was well past middle age. This sudden wealth and critical acclaim seemed to explode the ego which had been evident enough during his years of poverty. He did not meet wealth and fame with poise. Carl Van Vechten told me that Dreiser had no sense of taste, and Van Vechten was a man of discrimination who knew TD well. TD always had something of the oracular and overbearing in his makeup. I think in some cases this caused resentment in his friends which he was quick to sense and react to. Men friends had to take his personality as it was. A sensitive person could hardly enjoy his friendship for long. He was usually kinder to women even while deceiving them. Kirah Markham, with whom I had a long correspondence that continued until her death, still had affection for him even though she knew all about his deceptions.

*Since many--such as Earl Browder, Sherwood Anderson, and Ernest Hemingway--suspected Dreiser's motives in regard to Communism, was he effective as a political and social crusader?*

I doubt that he was as successful as a social crusader as he might have been because of his wrath and pugnacity. He was denunciatory rather than persuasive. Some people refused to take him seriously because of his eccentricities, and some even thought he was just out for publicity. He had perfectly valid social causes. His exposure of the evils in the Kentucky coal country, for example, is part of what is now recognized as the problem of Appalachia. He was not naive at all about the need for social reform but he was clumsy in his methods. I think he *was* naive in the field of politics--the field of getting practical results through political action.

*What evidence is there that Mary Annabel Fanton helped edit Sister Carrie?*

Mary Annabel Fanton was one of the many friends of TD interviewed by Robert H. Elias and his staff when the Dreiser collection at Penn was being organized and Elias was editing his 3-volume collection of Dreiser's letters. It's my recollection--I think this is right--that her part in the editing of *Sister Carrie* came out through interviews with her and others. I did not find any letters specifically mentioning her collaboration on *Sister Carrie*, though there is at least one showing other literary collaboration with TD.

*Dreiser's autobiographical works are often quite inaccurate factually, as you indicate. Do you believe that his philosophical analyses of himself in the early years (Dawn and Newspaper Days) are dependable?*

Any historian or biographer would find that TD had very little interest in factual accuracy and was sloppy about this all his life. His interest lay more in the philosophical interpretation of the

facts. I thought that many of his self-analyses in Dawn and News-paper Days, even if perhaps not totally accurate in detail, were at least remarkably honest and unsparing in their search for his own hidden motives, often at the expense of his self-esteem. One of his complexities was a simultaneous arrogance and humility.

*Do you know of any Dreiser materials that are made inaccessible by circumstances or restrictions?*

At the time I was researching at the University of Pennsylvania, there were at least a couple of smaller Dreiser collections, one of them a diary he kept for a short period, which were under lock and key. I suppose they were felt potentially embarrassing to living persons. Most important of all, it seemed to me, was a large collection of early letters from TD to Jug, written before they were married, preserved at the University of Indiana. Although of course Jug had long since died, the woman relative controlling these letters apparently had such a dislike for Dreiser that she refused to release them and was quite sharp with me when I asked permission. Let us hope this situation has changed--although I note that Ellen Moers had the same trouble.

[The situation has not changed. These letters are still totally restricted. Ed.]

*Do you know of any large letter collections presently in private hands which Penn might acquire either by purchase or gift?*

I know of no specific collection of Dreiser letters now in private hands. But I'd bet a dollar there are some in the hands of women he courted--women who cherished these relics of youth but felt them too personal for release. Some may have been lost, burned or passed on to survivors adjured to keep them sacred.

*Would you consider depositing at Penn the research material you accumulated in connection with Dreiser--that is, letters, interview tapes, etc.--to be put on restricted use (for qualified scholars only, to be published only with your permission)?*

Yes, I think I'll bequeath my TD research material, such as it is, to Penn. But you can understand my hope that Penn will not have it next month or even next year.

*What areas of Dreiser biography/criticism seem to hold the most promise for future investigation?*

Perhaps TD's unfinished philosophical work would hold most promise to investigators in the sense that so far as I know no one has gone to the immense time and trouble necessary to explore and appraise it. From my own brief look at some of these papers, it seems to me likely that they would be more productive of information about TD and his thinking and methods than of any scientific or philosophical discoveries. [Mrs. Marguerite Tjader Harris and Dr. John

J. McAleer are presently collaborating on a selected edition of *Notes on Life*. Ed.]

*In retrospect, could you provide a single paragraph summary of Dreiser the personality which represents your conception of him?*

To ask a one-paragraph summary of any person, much less one as complex and ambivalent as TD, is of course to ask for superficiality. I'd rather narrow the field somewhat and try to suggest a small portion of my idea of what it was that kept him from being an even greater man than he was. I keep coming back to what Van Vechten said--he said it with a bit of a twinkle but in perfect seriousness nevertheless--that TD had no sense of taste at all, in any field or direction. This is an exaggeration but not a large one. We all know there was a natural fitness and power in some of his poetry and prose. But he was too innately egocentric and violent to be seriously concerned about consideration of taste. This lack was evident in his writing and in his human relations when he was a prosperous Butterick editor, a struggling novelist, a nouveau riche literary lion, and when he was a critic of society. I can think of little that he did that did not show a sort of rip-snorting, bull-in-china-closet crudity. This crudity was not without some charm. As a person I think it made him interesting to the New York literary upper crust who took him up after 1925, although he was hard going in the long haul. His lack of discrimination or taste as a writer is known to every sophomore. This was not always because of carelessness, for he seems to have sweat blood over every page of *An American Tragedy*, for example. Yet I suspect that the blood he sweat was more over what he was going to say than how he was going to say it.

To top all this with a thundering cliché, any smart editor could have improved Dreiser's prose with a blue pencil, but no editor could have written such rich and moving prose in the first place.

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#### TWO DREISERS PLUS ONE

*Two Dreisers*, by Ellen Moers. New York: The Viking Press, 1969. xvii, 366 pp., index, \$10.00.

*Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels*, by Richard Lehan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969. Illus., xiv, 280 pp., index, \$8.95.

The publication of Ellen Moers' *Two Dreisers* is a happy event. Not a Dreiser scholar, at least until recently when she discovered that this "big one . . . had been there all along, swimming be-

low the surface," she has produced a volume that can hold its own with any Dreiser study thus far published. Americans of her generation, she confesses, "did not read Dreiser," but somehow--in what manner she does not say--his work came to her attention and, astonished at the man's achievement, she set to work. Perhaps this is precisely what was called for: a fine writer of some maturity; the Dreiser works encountered fresh and complete; a burst of enthusiasm; intuitive knowledge of what was needed. Whatever the explanation, the Moers-Dreiser convergence has proved a fortunate one.

Wisely limited to *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy*, the book designs a revelation of sources factual and psychological for Dreiser's fiction; by spin-off perhaps, an equally valuable revelation of the novelist's mind emerges. The approach to *Sister Carrie* opens with extensive probing of the 1890's journalistic apprenticeship (has anyone noted fully the role played by newspapers in Dreiser's novels?); not Dreiser's alone, but that of the many for whom the daily paper and the popular magazine became the main traveled road to fame: Willa Cather, Wallace Stevens, Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris. And not writers only, but journalistic photographers as well, men such as Alfred Steiglitz, and illustrators such as George Luks, Everett Shinn, William Glackens and John Sloan, whose work in other media both paralleled and was reflected in Dreiser's novels; the men whose graphics were labeled ashcan school just as Dreiser's honest fiction was labeled barbaric naturalism.

Standard influences are not ignored--Paul's theatrical involvements, the Dreiser sisters' loves, memories of Chicago--but rich new material is unearthed. The parallel of the title *Sister Carrie* with Balzac's *Cousin Bette* and *Pere Goriot*, which Dreiser himself alluded to, but which I have not seen remarked upon, says much about the intent of Dreiser's first novel and binds him with the French writer at whose side he belongs. Howells' influence is demonstrated to be more significant than believed. Of greatest importance is the deep probing which uncovers the guidance of Spencer's *First Principles*; in that book are found the roots of Dreiser's famous "chemisms" and of his certainty that final knowledge in a universe governed by harsh and mysterious forces is not to be had. Allied with this is Dreiser's acquaintance with the pseudo-scientist Elmer Gates, whose laboratory he visited and with whom he corresponded. Gates' theories on the chemical nature of thought rang true for Dreiser, answering for the time being his perpetual puzzlement over life, and *Sister Carrie* reflects Gates' notions when Dreiser likens the New York atmosphere to "a chemical reagent" affecting one's aims, views, and inmost desires, pertinently demonstrated in the simultaneous physical and psychological alterations occurring in Hurstwood during his decline: "The poisons generated by remorse inveigh against the system, and eventually produce marked physical deterioration. To these Hurstwood was subject."

Dreiser's discovery of Spencer and Gates, occurring early

enough to influence *Sister Carrie*, was supplemented in the years following by his coming upon the work of Jacques Loeb and Sigmund Freud, which Ellen Moers treats at length in her lucid discussion of the layers of experience underlying composition of *An American Tragedy*. Loeb's experiments relative to the nature of tropism, the reactions of a mechanism to changes of heat, color, light, etc. in its environment, underlie such everyday phenomena as the boost in activity observable when cold ants become warm (heat augments the supply of adenosine triphosphate to their leg muscles); these experiments are shown to be a basis for the environmental reactions of Dreiser's characters. An instance--the upsurge of ambition prompted in Clyde Griffiths by immersion in the world of the Green-Davidson hotel; another, produced prior to Dreiser's knowledge of Loeb--Hurstwood's failure when trapped in the New York maelstrom. In Freud Dreiser found not only an entire new vocabulary (he began using it with the enthusiasm of a convert), but also support for his own favorite term "chemism." Particularly in the work of Freud's translator, Abraham Arden Brill, with whom Dreiser corresponded, the novelist saw corroboration for his own misty theories. Brill's *The New Criminology*, depicting abnormal behavior as resulting from chemical influences, provided an apparently unassailable basis for Dreiser's portrayal of the Clyde Griffiths of the world as helpless pawns in the grip of physico-chemical forces which effectively negate individual burdens of guilt. It is in the effects on Dreiser of Spencer, Gates, Loeb and Freud-Brill that Ellen Moers' book scales new, high ground; without perhaps fully intending it, she has given us an interior biography worthy of standing companion to W. A. Swanberg's *Dreiser*.

Richard Lehan's *Theodore Dreiser* is quite another type of study. Subtitled "His World and His Novels," its scope is comprehensive, its audience the un- or semi-initiated. While one has difficulty imagining a reader unfamiliar with Dreiser's works being able to appreciate fully the revelations in *Two Dreisers*, any Dreiser reader, beginner or advanced, is bound to learn a good deal from Lehan. One chapter is devoted to each of the novels; others treat biography, Dreiser's ideas on Life, and his attraction to the Russian experiment and to Communism generally. "My concern," he explains, "is with the genesis and evolution of the novels, their pattern, and their meaning." His sources are primarily (1) biography, the early Dreiser family experience and the later career, and (2) the manuscript collection at Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library in Philadelphia.

With the Dreiser family Lehan does very well indeed, drawing upon letters, records, the autobiographies and, finally, the manuscripts, to establish a basis for biography-in-fiction. His elucidation of the Dreiser children's lives and the various patterns by which their personal traumas are combined, expanded upon, and woven into the fabric of the novels is particularly admirable; the same holds true for Lehan's treatment of the appearance through his



writing of Dreiser's own childhood-inspired obsession with poverty. The alterations in character from original holograph to published book (both Carrie and Jennie became less worldly wise, less conniving as their gold-digging proclivities were systematically deleted from the manuscripts) reveal interesting facets of Dreiser's creative effort. Chronologically arranged, the volume flows with easy continuity, the final chapter placing Dreiser in context with his literary times.

The general clarity of Lehan's study, sparkling with details gleaned from intensive work on the Dreiser papers, makes it doubly unfortunate that the book cannot invariably be depended upon as a record. An array of typographical slips (*Double* for *Doubleday*; *Trash* for *Trask*; *Owsley* for *Owsley*; *Bartless* for *Bartlett*) is symptomatic of another chain of errors, and both may possibly result from undue urgency. To cite data from one chapter alone (No. 7, "The Financier," "The Titan," and "The Stoic"): Lehan states that in his groundwork for the Cowperwood books Dreiser compiled note-sheets totalling 915. Not so; the numbers run higher actually, and the tally is complicated (1) by the existence of at least *two* numbered sequences, one evidently having been constructed especially in preparation for *The Stoic*; and (2) by the existence of unnumbered sheets whose own total may well run into the hundreds. In addition, on these note-sheets the relevant dates of Charles Yerkes' life appear, not at top center as stated, but invariably at the top left hand, paralleling the text.

Facts take a bad mauling. The collapse in Chicago of the Moore Brothers enterprises, dated 1890 by Lehan, actually occurred in 1896, as indicated both in Dreiser's notes and in their supportive press clippings. Charles Yerkes' role in this event took place at the home of Philip D. Armour, identified correctly with his fictional counterpart, Mr. Arneel; except that Lehan has earlier identified Arneel as being modeled upon the Philadelphia financier, Widener. (Widener is but one of the four New York-Philadelphia robber-barons mistakenly identified as models for 1890's Chicagoans in *The Titan*.) In Lehan's account, six carriages followed Yerkes to his grave, although Dreiser's notes specify "four carriages only," of which a single vehicle, not the four Lehan suggests, bore hired detectives. Mollie Moore Yerkes, the financier's widow, drove a carriage drawn by four black horses, as reported--but it was in Philadelphia, as a girl, and not in New York, as a mature, would-be society woman. Clippings in the Dreiser papers make this clear and also that Mollie was not forty, as Lehan reports, when she married Wilson Mizner (she had married Yerkes twenty-five years previously) but closer to the fifty suggested in Dreiser's notes. The Yerkes mansion was lost, not because the London Underground Company attached the millionaire's property, but because Mary Adelaid Yerkes, tired of waiting, demanded her dower rights in preference to sitting out the resolution of her husband's estate, a voluntary act which made mandatory the public sale of her home.

On occasion serious consequences rise from misapprehending the

dates Dreiser affixed to his notes and clippings. One significant clipping, "The Materials of a Great Novel," in Dreiser's hand clearly marked February 4, 1906, is recorded as 1900; because this clipping contains a synopsis of the real-life story Dreiser used as a model, Lehan is later deceived into compounding his error by suggesting that Dreiser began to formulate his story in 1900—which would have been a full five years before his model's death inspired the clipping and was reported in it. These mistakes, while not seriously impairing the general sweep and progress of Lehan's work, do cast a pall over its credibility and diminish its stature as scholarship. One hopes that a revision will erase them entirely, rendering this book as reliable as it is lively.

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#### DREISER STUDIES: WORK TO BE DONE

I will attempt in this brief discussion of the work before us in Dreiser studies to note a number of all-important specific projects and to outline as well several broad areas of interest that require further research and criticism.

##### *Manuscripts and Bibliography*

The Dreiser Collection at the University of Pennsylvania is so large that a calendar of its holdings is very far in the future. In the meantime, Mrs. Westlake and her staff have provided a working checklist. Lacking, however, is an adequate guide to Dreiser manuscripts and letters in other collections, since listings in *American Literary Manuscripts* and the *National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections* are too summary to be useful. A census of Dreiser manuscripts (excluding Pennsylvania) is therefore desirable. One of its important by-products would be its contribution to the efforts of the Pennsylvania Dreiser Collection to acquire xerox or microfilm copies of Dreiser manuscripts elsewhere, which would eventually make the Collection a "single stop" Dreiser research center. A census should also contain a chronological checklist of Dreiser's addresses to facilitate the dating of letters and manuscripts.

A bibliography of Dreiser's published writing is desperately needed. McDonald and Orton are hopelessly incomplete and out of date. At present, Donald Pizer has circulated a 41-page mimeographed "Working Checklist" of Dreiser's publications in order to encourage further research, and Hugh Atkinson has announced a checklist to be published by Kent State University Press in the fall of 1970. Some particularly difficult areas which Pizer has encountered are:

Dreiser's anonymous and pseudonymous newspaper and magazine publication in the 1890's; the apparent unavailability of *Ev'ry Month* for the months October, 1895-March, 1896, and May, 1896; and Dreiser's miscellaneous journalism throughout his later career, including his contributions to Soviet periodicals. A definitive primary bibliography would also attempt to provide such vital information as the extent and nature of Dreiser's revisions in the various published appearances of a particular work; his reuse of material in different form (this is particularly important for his magazine hackwork of the late 1890's); and--most important of all--the probable date of composition of each published work, especially his short stories and essays, which often appeared several years or more after composition. A descriptive as well as cumulative bibliography is needed. Work on the important subject of Dreiser's influence and reputation abroad would benefit from a list, if not a complete bibliography, of translations of his work.

Secondary bibliography, though less vital than primary, is also in much need of basic work. Atkinson's recent checklist (in the Merrill Series) is presently the most useful compilation, but it is incomplete and unannotated. The most frequently used list, the one at the close of the Kazin and Shapiro *Stature* volume, is woefully inaccurate. What is needed is a complete annotated bibliography which will give particular attention to some of the following neglected areas of Dreiser secondary bibliography: newspaper interviews in which he is quoted extensively; theses and dissertations; contemporary reviews; and reminiscences and accounts by friends, often buried in autobiographies or letter collections.

### *Text and Editions*

Major needs in this area are for collections of Dreiser's uncollected work and for critical editions of his principal books. The first seems the more readily achievable, and Pizer and Lehan already have underway an edition of Dreiser's uncollected non-fictional prose. His short stories, plays, and poems also require scholarly collected editions. And despite the excellence of Elias' edition of the letters, it is perhaps time to begin thinking of a fuller collection, particularly for the early period of Dreiser's career. Critical editions of Dreiser's published books represent a more problematical venture. Two questions which arise are: Do we know enough about Dreiser (as we do about an Emerson or a Hawthorne) to attempt such volumes at this time? (One "minor" problem, for example, would be the authority of the many revisions made in Dreiser's manuscripts by friends and editors.) And can the CEAA editorial standards be meaningfully or usefully applied to Dreiser? A critical edition of *An American Tragedy* done according to CEAA principles would probably run to five thick volumes in order to include substantive variants in the extant manuscripts of that novel. In short, there is need for a reliable collected edition of Dreiser, but it is doubtful whether a CEAA kind of edition is either feasible or attainable. One solution to this dilemma would be the prepara-

tion of a scholarly collected edition which made available an authoritative text under different editorial principles than those guiding the CEAA projects and which did not include a full textual apparatus. (See Bernard Weinberg's essay on editing Balzac--in *Editing Nineteenth-Century Texts*, ed. John M. Robson--for a parallel suggestion.) Another solution might be to postpone any attempt to prepare a scholarly collected edition until a generation of scholars (and particularly doctoral students) have worked extensively and closely on the complex problems attendant on particular texts.

### *Biographical and Historical Studies*

Swanberg set the record straight for many of the specific details of Dreiser's life, but there are still numerous gaps in our knowledge of the relationship of Dreiser's life and times to his work. Ellen Moers and Richard Lehan have helped close some of these gaps, but many others remain. A few are: popular clergymen of Dreiser's early Chicago years and their influence on his ideas; the New York newspaper world of the late 1890's and Dreiser's emergence as a popular journalist; The "Genius" controversy and its lasting impact on Dreiser's conception of American society; the relationship between Dreiser's involvement in left-wing movements during the 20's and 30's and his later poetry, essays, and fiction. We need to know more about Dreiser's friends at different stages of his career, particularly those who read or corrected his manuscripts and who appear in his work in various guises. Even such subjects as Dreiser and science, or Dreiser and painting and architecture, or Dreiser and Charles Yerkes and Chester Gillette, though often discussed, still await thorough and significant examination. And though Dreiser's personal stature and his place in American literary history are today seldom denied, there have been no full studies of his all-important relationship with Mencken, for example, or of his usefulness as a literary touchstone for critics of all persuasions during the 20's and 30's.

### *Criticism*

There is little to be gained by further attempts to strait-jacket Dreiser's fiction within a conventional definition of naturalism. Rather, more work is needed which resembles Ellen Moers' *American Scholar* discussion of *Sister Carrie* or R.P. Warren's *Yale Review* article on *An American Tragedy*--that is, work which examines Dreiser as an artist capable of considerable (and distinctive) literary sophistication. In other words, we need fewer studies which pay homage to his power while damning his technique and more which examine his technique to discover the roots of his power. In particular, Dreiser's fiction would benefit from close studies of his point of view technique, his symbolic structure, and his mythic themes and form. Such theorists of the novel as Wayne Booth, E. K. Brown, and Northrop Frye have supplied us with critical insights into how fiction works which should permit us to go beyond the traditional emphasis on Dreiser's prose style or

his documentary massiveness. Finally, we would benefit from studies which worked closely with Dreiser's other major literary forms (autobiography, poetry, the short story, and the sketch) to determine both their intrinsic qualities and their relationship to his novels.

--Donald Pizer  
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### DREISER HOLDINGS AT THE LILLY LIBRARY

Donald Pizer's "Dreiser Studies: Work To Be Done," above, indicates the need for a census of Dreiser manuscripts not presently available at the University of Pennsylvania. Thus, to encourage and expedite such a project, we offer the following descriptive survey of the manuscript holdings at Indiana University's Lilly Library in the hope that it will stimulate other surveys of scattered Dreiser materials for future numbers of the *DN*. Additional information on the Lilly holdings can be obtained by contacting Dr. Elfrieda Lang, Curator of Manuscripts, Lilly Library.

*Dreiser MSS I* — This file contains three undated drafts of *Dawn*, donated to the Lilly Library by Helen Dreiser in 1946. The earliest draft is handwritten and numbers 3,812 pages; chapter 78 is missing. The second draft, numbering 395 pages, is a rough typescript of chapters 1 through 32 with autograph revisions. The third draft is a 942-page typescript of the entire work with autograph revisions; included are two versions of pages 99-102, two copies of pages 265-6, and three versions of chapter 94. These manuscripts are restricted and may be used only with the permission of the Dreiser Trust.

*Dreiser MSS II* — This collection was purchased by the Lilly Library from the heirs of Sara White Dreiser in 1957 and supplemented in 1963. At their instance, however, it is now totally restricted. The file contains seventy-one letters from Dreiser to Sara White, dated May 1, 1896, through September 6, 1898, and carbons of Dreiser's correspondence to Sir Casper Purdon Clarke (1909), Clarence S. Howell (1909), John M. Oskison (1910), Mrs. M. Landon Reedy (1909), William Spray (1909), Mrs. Helen F. Villard (1909), and George W. Wilder (1909). Also included are forty-four letters written to Dreiser between 1907 and 1910 by such figures as Robert Todd Lincoln, Jack London, William Jennings Bryant, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. Mementos preserved by Mrs. Dreiser, such as photographs, pencil sketches, and newspaper clippings by and about Dreiser, round out the collections.

*Dreiser MSS III* — This file is made up of nineteen photographs and one lithograph, donated in 1960 by Dr. Vera Dreiser. Most of the photographs have been published.

*Dreiser MSS IV* — This file is a collection of miscellaneous Dreiser papers purchased in 1966 from Robert Wian III, Glendale, California. In all, there are forty-one manuscripts and nineteen copies, including correspondence, notes, outlines, and drafts of stories and essays, most of which were unpublished and often incomplete. Some of these drafts are autograph copies, but most are typescripts and carbons with autograph revisions. Most are undated, but the content suggests that they are projects of Dreiser's final years. Some titles of the more finished drafts are "The Man Who Wanted to be a Poet" (4 pages), "Challenge to the Creative Man" (8 pages), "Cyrelle's Mother Had the Quiet Unassuming Manner of a Gentle Soul" (10 pages), "The Fairy" (6 pages), and "Intellectual Unemployment" (4 pages). Also included are 193 pages of notes and drafts of *The Stoic*, most of which is undated. Some of the major *Stoic* items are a typescript outline of chapters 1 through 53, dated June 6, 1932-August 6, 1932 (13 pages); typescript summaries of the dates and activities of Cowperwood (27 pages), Aileen (9 pages), Berenice (4 pages), Gladys Unger (2 pages), and Ethel Yerkes (2 pages); a typescript summary of the settlement of Cowperwood's property and affairs (17 pages); a typescript summary of character interaction, referred to as "The Stage" (6 pages); and carbon copies of chapters 38 (4 pages, dated May 21, 1933), 67 (10 pages), 75 (?) (14 pages), 76 (7 pages), 81 (9 pages), 83 (10 pages), 87 (6 pages), 88 (14 pages), 89 (12 pages), and 90 (16 pages). Most correspondence has already been published in the *Elias Letters*, exceptions being letters to the Writers League of America (carbon, May 13, 1941) and to Mencken (autograph copy, June 1, 1945; typescript, June 2, 1945).

*American Literature MSS* — Included in this file is a medical journal kept by Dreiser during his struggle with neurasthenia (October 22, 1902-February 17, 1903). It runs 170 notebook pages (6"x8") and gives a day-by-day account of his physical condition, his attempts to write, his reading program, and his attempts to regain physical and emotional stability. Other manuscripts are "American Critical Society or Society for Critical Examination and Endorsement" (4 pages, signed typescript, July 20, 1919); "The Carnegie Works at Pittsburgh" (page 27, autograph copy, n.d.); "The Day of the Coon Song" (15 pages, autograph copy, n.d.); and "New York Fifty Years Ago Today" (pages 1-15, 21-24, 28-36, unfinished, autograph copy, n.d.). This file also contains Dreiser letters to Richard Duffy (1901), "Dear Rida" (1909), William Griffith (1915), and G.R. Gabriel (1939). The Duffy letter is a nine-page autobiographical account.

*Flanagan MSS* — This file, donated to the Lilly in 1967, contains twenty-eight letters (November 11, 1893-December 24, 1926) from members of the Dreiser family (Al, Ed, Theodore, Paul, and Claire) to members of the Jesse Rector family, friends from the

Sullivan, Indiana, days. Five of these letters were written by Theodore to Emma Rector (Flanagan) between November 28, 1893, and April 4, 1894. These letters are highly introspective and provide some interesting insights into Dreiser's self-concepts and ambitions at twenty-two.

*Sinclair MSS* — This file contains twenty-nine pieces of Dreiser correspondence to Upton Sinclair (1914-1941). Three of these letters have been published in the *Elias Letters*.

Miscellaneous Correspondence — These items include letters to Ludwig Lewisohn, August 16, September 21, 1926; to Professor Josephine K. Piercy, Indiana University, February 24, 1925, January 15, February 6, March 29, and April 9, 1929; to Mrs. Upton Sinclair, September 13, 1932, January 15, 1939; and to Cyril Clemens, April 7, 1945.

In future numbers of the *DN*, it is our plan to do a more thorough analysis of the nature and value of some of these items, such as the medical journal, the Rector letters, and the Stoic drafts.

--Richard W. Dowell  
Indiana State University  
Terre Haute, Indiana

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#### THE DREISER SOCIETY

Memberships in The Dreiser Society are available for all interested Dreiser enthusiasts. Membership fee is \$5 for two years, and includes a 2-year subscription to the *Newsletter*. Membership fees will be used to help pay the printer, and members' names will be listed in each issue of the *Newsletter*. An annual directory of The Dreiser Society's membership, including addresses, will be mailed to all members. The Society might also elect officers and arrange get-togethers in months to come.

--The Editors

COMING ATTRACTIONS . . . . A brief look at some  
feature items in issues ahead . . . .

--AN INTERVIEW WITH ELLEN MOERS, author of *Two Dreisers*.

--CHECKLIST OF DREISER SCHOLARSHIP. The *DN* will provide a yearly annotated checklist of Dreiser scholarship, both published and in progress. Those who wish to announce work(s) in progress are encouraged to submit information to the editors.

--DREISER'S MEDICAL JOURNAL. A study of the insights provided by Dreiser's day-by-day (22 October 1902 through 17 February 1903) account of his physical condition, his attempts to regain his emotional stability, his reading program, and his inability to write during the struggle with neurasthenia.

--ASSESSING DREISER, by Richard Lehan. "I am trying to speak to a question that keeps coming up with Dreiser," says the author. "What is his value as a writer? Why does he endure when he wrote at times so badly?"

--PLUS REVIEWS, NEWS, NOTES . . . and more. Much more.