

# THE DREISER NEWSLETTER

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## DREISER AND PAPERBACKS: AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER

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Professor Joseph Brogunier's "Dreiser in Paperback: Riches and Rags" (*The Dreiser Newsletter*, IV [Spring 1973]) recalls Dreiser's own hope, expressed in 1939, to publish his works in paperback editions and the sequence of publishing circumstances that evoked a strategy to "bring [his] books back to life" in "cheap paper book publication." Unavailability to the public of certain of his books troubled Dreiser during most of the years from 1900 to 1945, as it continues to trammel students of his writings. His taste concerning the physical quality of his published books seems not to have met Professor Brogunier's standards, however. Even for his publications in hard cover, H. L. Mencken once hinted, Dreiser lacked an esthetic yardstick. Boasting of his own publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, Mencken wrote Dreiser on 2 September 1920: "He gets out good-looking books--not abortions, like Jones and Liveright--, he pays royalties promptly, and he is a good drummer."<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, at least *Hoosier Holiday*, published in 1916 by the John Lane Company, stands as a handsome example of the well-made book, enhanced by Franklin Booth's sketches. But in contrast to Dreiser's artistic concern about the shape of the experience conveyed in each of his works, his interest in the harmonious details of bookmaking was small.

Inviting Dreiser in 1917 to bring his works under the newly established Boni and Liveright imprint, Horace B. Liveright and Albert Boni stated their intent not only to publish whatever new work Dreiser offered, but, when funds permitted, to issue all of his previous works "in uniform binding and

uniform size."<sup>2</sup> Liveright's assurance that he would fight in court to restore to sale Dreiser's suppressed novel, *The "Genius"*, plus his and Boni's offer of the collected edition won for Boni and Liveright their role as Dreiser's sixth publisher. "This was an era," W. A. Swanberg explains, "when authors of standing were distinguished by 'complete works'; and Dreiser was not merely pleased by the prospect of his works appearing in a uniform edition, but heartened by the realization that the publisher must push to sell complete sets."<sup>3</sup> Liveright was never able, however, to publish the collected edition. Throughout more than fifteen years' connection--from 1918 into 1934--with the Liveright firm (called Boni and Liveright until late 1928, then Horace Liveright, Incorporated, until 1933, and finally Liveright, Incorporated), Dreiser tried without success to negotiate a contract for publication of all his works with Harper and Brothers,<sup>4</sup> with the Century Company,<sup>5</sup> and with Scribner's.<sup>6</sup> During many of those fifteen years, Liveright alternately kindled, then doused, the hope of a collected edition. Whereas in December 1920, for example, Liveright explained that current "staggering" manufacturing costs put the price of a set beyond reasonable sales expectations, the following April he assured Dreiser that he kept "in mind the publication of a complete set."<sup>7</sup>

In the contract between Dreiser and Boni and Liveright of 18 January 1923, Liveright agreed, *inter alia*, to begin publishing a collected edition of Dreiser's works in January 1927 and to guarantee a minimum royalty of \$10,000.00 on completion of the sale of one thousand sets.<sup>8</sup> Having secured the rights, plates, and stock of Dreiser's works in control of Dodd, Mead and of Harper and Brothers, Liveright could issue all of Dreiser's books except *A Traveler at Forty* under the Boni and Liveright imprint.<sup>9</sup> "In the fall of 1927, we launch the limited edition of the 'great Dreiser set,'" Liveright promised in a letter of 1 June 1926.<sup>10</sup> The promised collected edition was a key matter of negotiation in the contract between Dreiser and Boni and Liveright of 2 June 1926, which provided that a limited edition of Dreiser's collected works be inaugurated in the fall of 1927 and a library edition of the collected works issued in the spring of 1929.<sup>11</sup> At the close of 1927, however, Dreiser was frustrated by the publisher's failure to begin the limited edition of his collected works, which had been a deciding reason for accepting Boni and Liveright's offer of 1917 and for signing the contracts of 1923 and 1926. From the publisher's coign of vantage, after preliminary investigation of cost and probable sale of a collected edition, Boni and Liveright Vice President Donald Friede determined that the venture would be unprofitable.<sup>12</sup> "The day of collected editions, once a publishing staple, was," comments

Swanberg, "about over."<sup>13</sup> Although Dreiser continued to weigh proposals from other publishers and to complain to Liveright, he nevertheless signed a new contract with Liveright on 19 April 1929.<sup>14</sup> Then with the October 1929 collapse of the United States stock market Horace Liveright, Incorporated, moved toward bankruptcy.<sup>15</sup> "More trouble in my camp," Dreiser wrote Louise Campbell on 19 July 1932. "Liveright Inc[.] is busted. No money."<sup>16</sup> Early in March 1933, paper companies, printers, and binders refused to conduct further business with the indebted Liveright, Incorporated (successor in 1933 to Horace Liveright, Incorporated).<sup>17</sup> Finally on 4 May 1933, an involuntary petition of bankruptcy was filed against the firm.

On 28 September 1934, following arbitration with the Liveright receivers, Dreiser entered into a contract with Simon and Schuster, who in turn agreed to publish a uniform edition of his collected works.<sup>18</sup> On 1 October 1934, Dreiser paid the newly formed Liveright Publishing Corporation the arbitrated sum of \$6,000.00 for possession of all of his plates, thus making them available for the Simon and Schuster collected edition.<sup>19</sup> But Dreiser soon became dismayed at Simon and Schuster's delay in beginning the set. By 1937 his concern intensified to bitterness because Simon and Schuster had failed even to keep his books in print. By 1938 Dreiser was sounding out Longmans, Green and Scribner's and Viking in hope of finding a publisher to pay his debt to Simon and Schuster for advanced royalties and to take over his books.<sup>20</sup> By 1939 Dreiser turned for help to William C. Lengel, recently become his literary agent. The following copy of his letter to Lengel retains Dreiser's errors.<sup>21</sup>

1426 North Hayworth Ave.,  
Hollywood, Calif.  
May 6, 1939

Will Lengel,  
654 Madison Ave.,  
New York City.

Dear Lengel:

For some time I have been wanting to write you about my present unhappy relationship with Simon and Schuster.

As you know, their present attitude toward me, and their attitude, really, ever since I went in their,

has been amazingly antagonistic. It may be nothing more than a suspicion but I have had the feeling all along that the dreadful deal I got on my left over Liveright books, which they were supposed to stock and sell for me on a 15% royalty, was arranged between Pell and themselves through Mr. Shimkin, and that all along he has been a cause as well as a party to their attitude toward me. Having signed the contract, however, and gotten in there, I had no immediate way of getting out. Now, because of other developments, one or two of which you have pointed out to me, I may be in a position to pay them either in cash or publication securities, the sum they have asked and have agreed to take, which is \$10,000.

One thing that may make it possible for me to do this is the very likely sale of Sister Carrie here. Another thing is the rise of the cheap paper book publication companies to which you called my attention several years ago. I am satisfied that the best move that I could possibly make now would be to get one of these 25 cent book houses to take over all of my books and issue them either serially or as a set at 25 cents a volume, because on the strength of that they should be able to get a wide pre-publication subscription either for the sets or parts of it.

If a worth while advertising campaign by one of these houses were launched it should bring in money enough to repay me what I will have to pay Simon and Schuster and bring my books back to life, as well as make a lot of money for the publishing house, because, of course, I would accept a very low royalty which should run for the life of the books. In connection with that, of course, I would insist on reserving the right to issue, after a period of time, an expensive set of my books - and since you were the one who first pointed out to me that a cheap issue of a number of my books would be of value, I feel that you are the one who could take charge of this and put it over for me.

As I can show you, if I come to New York in connection with it, I have literally an enormous collection of letters, and a great quantity of them within the last three or four months - and all widely enthusiastic about one or another of the books from the first to the last and coming from all parts of the

world. Many of the writers are highly incensed because in each case they have discovered that the books are not only not to be found in the libraries or the book stores but that they are not even to be had on order from Simon and Schuster. They literally will not supply them.

That, in connection with this constant under-cover talk about my anti-Judaism which consisted of the mild correspondence I once had with Hutchins Hapgood, has caused all sorts of people who are inimical to me - writers and what not - to not only play this up but exaggerate it in every quarter, so that I feel that Simon and Schuster may themselves be joined with this issue to the end of taking me off of the market entirely. It may be that they identify me with Germany and have decided to include me in their campaign against Teutonic Culture. However, that really leaves me no door except the one I am proposing to you because at the present time no high cost book house is going to take over all of my books and issue them, and so place me before the public again. Besides, I am much more sympathetic with the cheap book idea since it brings within easy reach of the masses the total worth while literature of the world which should be theirs. I think it is the next obvious progressive step in connection with literature in general, and I would like to have my works shared.

Now in connection with this, what I would like you to do would be to consult with one and another of these low priced book companies, the best one first, of course, and see how it would respond to this idea. Since each volume would sell at 25 cents I would want to know what they would look upon as a fair percentage to pay me and whether or not they would really indulge in a preliminary publicity campaign, perhaps in connection not only with me but some others whose works they would like to issue cheaply in this way.

In order to impress the public as to the value of this idea, a really worth while campaign would be the most important phase of it, as this would be the thing that would sell complete sets in quantity as opposed to a lesser sale for single volumes. It is on the cheap sets, I am sure, that they would make really more.

Now as to this, there is another matter which has something to do with it. Since there is a likelihood of Sister Carrie being released through the movies, a special edition of the book should come out simultaneously with the release of the picture. At 25 cents a copy it should prove of great value and would help to sell not only the other volumes but the sets as a whole. I have no idea when this release will be, but if it goes through, action in connection with this phase of it should be immediate.

I feel that nothing should be said to Simon and Schuster in any way, at this time. Negotiations with them should wait until you have an offer that is worth while. Also it would be better, I think, if word as to these negotiations could be kept from them in every way until we are ready to act.

As to your commission, I don't know whether you would think 10% of whatever I get worth while or not. But I must re-emphasize the fact that in connection with all this a real publicity campaign would have to be undertaken. If that cannot be absolutely guaranteed I would not feel this move worth much of anything.

Regards.

Dreiser

Enclosed is the most recent letter concerning Moods and some of my other books.

D/R

By means of publishing a paperback set through one of the "cheap paper book publication companies," then, Dreiser hoped to "bring my books back to life." The third, fourth, and sixth paragraphs of the letter reflect Dreiser's shrewd business sense and foresight of a new direction for the publishing houses. Perhaps these paragraphs also suggest his movement toward an act of renunciation, despite the reserved "right to issue . . . an expensive set," of his long-held wish for a uniform edition in hard covers. (His letter to Lengel of 3 November 1941 expresses modest expectations in his anticipated publishing connection with G. P. Putnam and Son.<sup>22</sup>) Whether under the pressure of trying circumstances or of a burgeoning altruism, his conclusion is clear: "I am much more sympathetic with the cheap book idea since it brings within easy reach of the masses

the total worth while literature of the world which should be theirs. I think it is the next obvious progressive step in connection with literature in general, and I would like to have my works shared."

Over many months Lengel attempted to bring about the inexpensive edition, though, as he wrote Dreiser on 22 May 1939, "the book business seems to be shot to hell."<sup>23</sup> In the fall of 1941, using \$8,500.00 from the sale of the movie rights to *My Gal Sal* and \$1,500.00 from the sale of those to *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser bought his way out of the Simon and Schuster alliance.<sup>24</sup> Late in 1941 he signed on with Putnam, but no book of his was ever to bear the Putnam imprint.<sup>25</sup> Toward the end of 1943 he sought Mencken's opinion on whether Alfred A. Knopf or the Viking Press might be willing to publish a complete set of his books.<sup>26</sup> He took this occasion to express his regret that Putnam's could not "see the wisdom" even of reprinting his "more salable books" and so "supplying the current demand which exists." "They have not the perspective of a Liveright by any means, not the money, I think," he mused. In 1944 Dreiser repaid Putnam's advance and broke his connection with the firm.<sup>27</sup> Before death intervened on 28 December 1945, he had contracted with Doubleday, Doran and Company for publication of *The Bulwark* (1946) and *The Stoic* (1947), but not for a complete edition, the dream that has eluded him to this day.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Letter of H. L. Mencken*, ed. Guy J. Forgue (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), pp. 191-192. Mencken's references are to the John Lane Company, Dreiser's prior publisher, and to Boni and Liveright, Dreiser's current publisher.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Boni to Dreiser, 8 August 1917, Theodore Dreiser Collection, University of Pennsylvania (hereafter designated U.P.). See also Dreiser to Mencken, 30 July 1917, U.P.; and Walker Gilmer, *Horace Liveright: Publisher of the Twenties* (New York: David Lewis, 1970), p. 14.

W. A. Swanberg, *Dreiser* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> See Dreiser to Mencken, 27 August 1920, and Dreiser to William H. Briggs, 9 April 1921, *Letters of Theodore Dreiser* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), I, 275, 362.

<sup>5</sup> Dreiser to George L. Wheelock, 17 November 1920, *Letters*, I, 297-301.

<sup>6</sup> See Swanberg, p. 249.

<sup>7</sup> Liveright to Dreiser, 21 December 1920 and 12 April 1921, printed in Gilmer, pp. 46, 50.

<sup>8</sup> Copies of the contract and the Supplemental Agreement of 7 February 1923, U.P.

<sup>9</sup> See Dreiser to Dodd, Mead and Company, 15 January 1923, and Dreiser to Harper and Brothers, 3 February 1923, U.P. Also Liveright to Dreiser, 7 February 1923, U.P.; and Liveright to Dodd, Mead and Company, 12 April 1926, Horace Liveright Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

<sup>10</sup> Gilmer, p. 146.

<sup>11</sup> Copies of the contract, U.P.

<sup>12</sup> Swanberg, p. 349.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Copies of the contract, U.P. Also see Dreiser to William C. Lengel, 16 October 1928, *Letters*, II, 479-481; and Gilmer, p. 219.

<sup>15</sup> Gilmer, pp. 231-233; Swanberg, p. 357.

<sup>16</sup> *Letters*, II, 590.

<sup>17</sup> "Financial Set-up of Liveright, Inc.," U.P. See also Gilmer, pp. 233-234; Swanberg, pp. 410, 414.

<sup>18</sup> Copy of the contract, U.P.

<sup>19</sup> See the form attached to the letter of Arthur Carter Hume to Erich Posselt, 29 September 1934, U.P. See also Swanberg, pp. 428-429.

<sup>20</sup> See William C. Lengel to Dreiser, 10 February 1939, U.P.; and Swanberg, pp. 447, 467.

<sup>21</sup> The original of the letter is in the William C. Lengel Collection of the University of Pennsylvania and is printed here with the University's permission. This typewritten letter is signed by Dreiser, and the postscript is in Dreiser's hand.



For an explanation of the business dealings referred to in the second paragraph of the letter, see my "A Study of Theodore Dreiser's *The 'Genius'*," diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1972, pp. 401-405.

The film version of *Sister Carrie* was released by Paramount in 1951. But in 1940 Dreiser "sold *Sister Carrie* to RKO for \$40,000 . . ." (Swanberg, pp. 472, 528).

22 *Letters*, III, 944.

23 Dreiser Collection, U.P.

24 See Lengel to Dreiser, 2 October 1940, and Stanley M. Moffat to Lengel, 11 October 1941, William C. Lengel Collection, University of Pennsylvania. Also Swanberg, pp. 472, 475, 480.

25 Agreement of 27 December 1941, U.P.

26 *Letters*, III, 994-996.

27 See Earle H. Balch to Dreiser, 26 February 1945, U.P.

28 Copy of the contract, U.P.

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## Dreiser News and Notes

*Theodore Dreiser: A Primary and Secondary Bibliography* will be published by G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, in September. Compiled by Donald Pizer, Richard W. Dowell and Frederic E. Rusch, the bibliography contains over 4100 entries. In addition to information about Dreiser's publications and significant writings about them, there is information on interviews and speeches, productions of Dreiser's plays, adaptations of his works for stage and screen, and library holdings of Dreiser materials. . . . Robert Forrey has published a sketch of Charles Tyson Yerkes in the April 1975 number of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. In a note, Forrey states that the article "relies heavily, though not exclusively, on notes and newspaper clippings assembled by Theodore Dreiser in his research on Yerkes' life."

# DREISER AND THE POWYS FAMILY

Robert P. Saalbach  
Indiana State University

In the introduction to *Notes on Life*, John Cowper Powys has written:

. . . Dreiser is a thinker, and a thinker, moreover, with a living, growing philosophy of life, that had he lived to be a hundred would have remained incomplete and unfinished. And this was the case because his philosophy was the expression of his ever growing and developing personality. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Later, Powys writes in the same introduction:

For Dreiser the psychic world and the physical world were never divided. He was always seeing mountains as men and men as atoms, and men and mountains and atoms as transitory bubbles in an unfathomable flood of Being, of which there was neither beginning nor end, and where reality was always turning into illusion and illusion into reality!

If space permitted, I would quote the long paragraph which follows, most of it in Dreiser's own words: "transmutation of personality is positively the outstanding law of life, so much so that even the mountains and plains, to say nothing of the cities and hamlets, change men, transmute them from one thing to another. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Quoting Whitman, Powys says that Dreiser "contained multitudes."<sup>3</sup> It is true.<sup>4</sup>

This sense of being one with Nature, continuous with it rather than apart from it, responding to it rather than attempting to control it, is the possession of the creative artist as distinct from the academic intellectual.<sup>5</sup> The word "thinker" in the first quotation from Powys above, along with the word "philosophy," is not to be understood in purely intellectual terms; as the quotation makes clear, it is only the intellectual side of a growing creative personality, one tied to Nature

and the body in the same mystical sense as one finds in Whitman. I call it "poetic." This is why, in my opinion, Dreiser found himself attracted to the Powys family.<sup>6</sup>

On page 96 of Louis Marlow's *Welsh Ambassadors*, Llewelyn, the youngest of the three literary Powys brothers, is described as follows:

Though now he is articulate as then he was not, Llewelyn is as I knew him first, an impassioned affirmer of the divinity of the senses of Man, a perceiver, with rare insight and joy, of the diverse multitude of appearances in Nature and in beasts and birds, and in the natural life of human creatures. The amorous desire of life, which gives to all his writings their prime controlling impulse, was in him ever since he first opened his eyes to the world.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly what is said here of Llewelyn Powys could apply just as much to Dreiser. On page 99 we read:

What degradation [Llewelyn] would demand, is there in the natural desire of one young creature for another, what is there in it but bounty and life, so long as the obscene shadow of the envious moralist falls nowhere near? In even "the lust of the goat" there is "the bounty of God."

The quotation from Blake is one that Marguerite Tjader, in a personal conversation, told me Dreiser himself was quite fond of. What neither Llewelyn Powys nor Dreiser liked was the arrogance of those human beings who claim to have "eternal truth" at hand and who, as a result, ride roughshod over others. Such a person was *The Martyr*, thrown to the lions for his profession of Christianity in ancient Rome, though he was only what Dreiser calls "an electro-chemical formula," like the lion, like the emperor, like other Christians. Of this poem Llewelyn Powys wrote, some years after his marriage in 1925:

I had been meaning to write to say how excellent I thought your poem of the Christian Martyr. I have delighted in it and read it to many people. I think it is an extraordinarily fine poem, far the best poem that I have seen for a long time. Alyse agreed with me and thought it wonderful.

The letter is dated July 14, 1933.<sup>8</sup>

There are both similarities and differences in the actual facts concerning the Powys family and that of Dreiser. Ten of thirteen Dreiser children grew to adulthood; four were boys, and of these only Theodore, and to a lesser extent Paul, showed genuine creative abilities in the literary art. Furthermore, the Dreiser family came from "the wrong side of the tracks" and was strongly influenced by the father's Catholicism. Ten of the eleven children born to the Rev. Charles Francis Powys and his wife lived to adulthood; of these, six were boys, and three of these -- John Cowper, Theodore Francis, and Llewelyn -- showed creative writing talent. Of the other three, one (A. R. Powys) became a famous architect, and another (Littleton Powys) was the headmaster of a preparatory school. The youngest brother, Willie, was a farmer. It was A. R. and Littleton that affirmed conservative views derived from their father, and perhaps in this way they resemble Dreiser's brother Ed. Of the four Powys girls, one -- Phillipa -- is the author of two published novels. As Louis Marlow describes her, the wife of the Rev. Charles Francis Powys, known only as Mrs. Powys, was much more possessive than was Dreiser's mother, at least as Dreiser describes her: for example, on p. 5 Marlow writes:

Mrs. Powys hated success. She hated, with secret intensity, well-constituted people, or even people whose health was too good. When Llewelyn developed consumption and was determined not to die of it, she was far from friendly to his insistent will.

Of course, one of the most significant differences between the two families was that the Dreisers were American and the Powyses English. Kenneth Hopkins, writing from Southrepps, Norfolk, in August 1970, tells us in his introduction to the reissue of Louis Marlow's book that *Welsh Ambassadors* is a re-titling of what was first to be called *Three Christian Brothers*.<sup>9</sup> Marlow himself says, on page 47, that the title was suggested by Llewelyn and used, even though A. R. and Littleton objected that the Powys family had been in England for four hundred years and that there was no proof of Welsh origin. Even Llewelyn's wife Alyse, until persuaded by her husband, objected. It is characteristic of Llewelyn, I think, that he told Marlow:

You would have to add an explanatory note. 'The cuckoo, the most poetical and scandalous of all British birds, is known in certain shires as the Welsh ambassador because its arrival used to coincide with the appearance of

Welsh field labourers who came into England to be hired in the summer 'hayfields' or something of that kind.

Marlow remarks on this:

Apart from this matter of association of the Powyses with the poetical and scandalous cuckoo, the title seems to me to have the right kind of significance. Although Powys derivations may be more Saxon than Celtic, every member of this family is, actually, more Celtic than Saxon: in mind, in emotions, and in appearance.<sup>10</sup>

I have gone into this matter at some length because, to me, it reminds one of Dreiser. A correspondence-student of mine commented recently on *An American Tragedy* as a very fine book which she had never read before because Dreiser was "taboo." And, as everyone knows, people are taboo because they are considered in some ways (in Dreiser's case morally) to be "cuckoo." The plight of the genuine creative artist is the same on both sides of the Atlantic.

However, Dreiser's Americanism shows through in another way, to me not so complimentary: John Cowper Powys, we are told by Marlow, liked to go to burlesque shows, especially in America, but Dreiser's Puritanism would hardly allow for such a practice. Indeed, even Marlow is offended; he writes of one burlesque show which he attended with John Cowper Powys as follows (p. 35):

Very few of the girls on the stage were attractive in face or figure, and not many of them were young. They could not dance. How like John to prefer this kind of show to the Russian Ballet! He chooses to prefer the worst kind of show just as he chooses to prefer the worst kind of whiskey.

Of course, Dreiser's efforts to get the Russian ballet to America are well known.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the references to John Cowper's "tart" (mistress) remind one of Paul, and Llewelyn's many love affairs prior to his marriage to Alyse remind one of Dreiser himself. If Marlow is not concealing some facts, however, there is a kind of British Puritanism in the cessation of outside affairs after marriage to Alyse on the part of Llewelyn, while Dreiser's sexual adventures while married to "Jug" (and even to Helen) are well known.

None of this, of course, is meant to reflect on John Cowper Powys, Llewelyn Powys, or Theodore Dreiser. Dr. Neda

Westlake once remarked to me that Swanberg was shocked that a great creative artist such as Dreiser was not morally circum-spect. He was, Dr. Westlake said, quite unprepared to find that creative artists are also human. However that may be, Swanberg was not unprepared to see Dreiser's great contribution to freedom of expression, and this is paralleled by the Powys family. Speaking particularly of Llewelyn, Marlow writes:

That there should be, among men, so much to thwart this complete possession of life and to mar and mutilate such possession as may be won, naturally provokes Llewelyn's indignation. It provokes him to protests, too, propagandist protests. He is not only a life-lover but a hater of death in life, and of the sons and daughters of that death. It is because the ways of the world of to-day are seen by him as so damnably obstructive to full living that he aims shaft after shaft, of invective and ridicule against them. "Damnable Opinions!" Llewelyn had expressed his hostility to them long before he wrote a book with that title. But lately his propagandism has pronounced itself more clearly and directly. This has given his critics another cause for resentment, for depreciation. Supercilious cold-shouldering of literary propagandists was familiar in the 'nineties, and it is hardly less familiar to-day. It was silly then, and it is silly now. . . .

So long as enmity to happiness exists, propaganda against that enmity, from those whose natures and abilities enable them for it, does a sovereign service. If the counter-attacker can give his words the light and strength which literary art or genius alone can give them, his validity is of course far greater than that of the mere pamphleteer, however honest and energetic; and the value of his work as literature is no less than if he were writing as "pure artist." The enemies of his propaganda will naturally decry it, and will have it stopped if they can while they carry on their own. In our day the conscious and unwitting haters of happiness are at least no less active in promulgating their views than they were. They have the upper hand: they are united and organized, and they can pay people to write for them. These are the upholders of war, the "anti-sex maniacs" and restrictionists of all varieties, the champions of the cruel injustices and avidities of money-lust. It is against the doctrines of these people that Llewelyn Powys contends.

. . . 12

And for the name "Llewelyn Powys" one could just as well substitute "Theodore Dreiser."

According to Marlow, John Cowper, though the most successful of the Powys brothers, with the longest bibliography, was not as good a writer as Theodore Francis nor, perhaps, as sensitive as Llewelyn. He was, however, a much better lecturer, and much more "modern" in the sense that adaptation to change was much easier for him than the others. Theodore, though he did own a wireless, stayed close to home, and Llewelyn even objected to the wireless. Meanwhile, John Cowper Powys lectured all over America and often in Europe as well. He was the perfect choice for introducing Dreiser's *Notes on Life*, just as Dreiser was, perhaps, the perfect choice to write a preface for John Cowper's *Ebony and Ivory*.

Still, though, one wants to add "Not quite." Hopkins, in his introduction to *Welsh Ambassadors*, tells the following story; it is recorded in Louis Marlow's novel, *Swan's Milk*, and Dexter is Marlow:

In America during the war Dexter met Theodore Dreiser, H. L. Mencken, Carl van Vechten and other American writers including Faith Baldwin who was then in the delicate loveliness of her early youth. He valued especially his contact with Dreiser, and treasured a presentation copy of one of Dreiser's books, with its humorously deferential inscription, "Master, what thinkest thou?" He treasured, too, the memory of Dreiser's puzzled look when, at a loss for the word for the young of swans, he appealed to Aleister Crowley: "What is it? What would you call a young swan?" And his look, more puzzled still and now resentfully defensive, when Crowley replied, "Why not call him Alfred?"<sup>13</sup>

Dreiser is usually serious, as he is in the *Notes*. John Cowper Powys, a master at holding lecture-audiences, knew the importance of humor.

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Dreiser, *Notes on Life*, ed. Marguerite Tjader and John J. McAleer (Univ. of Alabama Press, 1974), p. xi. See also Robert P. Saalbach, ed. *Selected Poems by Theodore Dreiser* (New York: Exposition, 1969), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Dreiser, p. xiii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> For a further expansion of the likenesses between Whitman and Dreiser, see Saalbach, pp. 16-17 and *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> A recent issue of *Connections II*, published by the Radical Caucus of the American Studies Association, shows how a university education tends to isolate the intellect from the rest of the "educated person." The creative artist never allows this isolation, or -- if he does -- he fails in his creative work.

<sup>6</sup> The material on the Powys family here presented is from Louis Marlow's *Welsh Ambassadors*. Marlow (the pseudonym of Louis Umfreville Wilkinson, a novelist in his own right) had written the book in 1936. It was re-issued by Bertram Rota Ltd, London, in 1971 with an introduction by Kenneth Hopkins.

<sup>7</sup> I do not agree with the implication of Marlow that creative artists are born rather than made, but otherwise I think this quotation excellent.

<sup>8</sup> Saalbach, p. 238.

<sup>9</sup> Marlow, p. xv.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> See Ruth Epperson Kennell, *Theodore Dreiser and the Soviet Union* (New York: International, 1969), pp. 230-234.

<sup>12</sup> Marlow, pp. 96-98.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxix.



# A DREISER CHECKLIST, 1974

Compiled and Annotated by  
**Frederic E. Rusch**

This checklist covers the year's work on Dreiser in 1974 plus a number of publications omitted from previous checklists. With the exception of works reviewed in the *Dreiser Newsletter* and abstracts in *Dissertation Abstracts International* (DAI) and *Masters Abstracts* (MA), I have annotated all new publications I have been able to examine. Reprints have not been annotated unless they appeared with new introductory matter.

For their assistance, I wish to thank Mary Jean DeMarr and Tsokan Huang and the authors who sent me copies of their publications.

## I. NEW EDITIONS AND REPRINTS OF DREISER'S WORKS

*An American Tragedy*. Intro. H. L. Mencken. Cleveland: World, 1946. Rpt. Apollo Editions. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1974.

*The Best Short Stories of Theodore Dreiser*. Intro. James T. Farrell. Cleveland: World, 1956. Rpt. Apollo Editions. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1974.

*Dawn*. New York: Liveright and London: Constable, 1931. Rpt. Bath, Eng.: Cedric Chivers, 1974.

*A Hoosier Holiday*. Illus. by Franklin Booth. New York: John Lane, 1916. Rpt. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974.

"Myself and the Movies," *Esquire*, 20 (July 1943), rpt. in *Esquire*, 80 (Oct. 1973), 156, 382.

*Newspaper Days*. New York: Liveright, 1931. Rpt. New York: Beekman, 1974.

*Notes on Life*. Ed. Marguerite Tjader and John J. McAleer. University, AL: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1974.

See review by Rolf Lunden in *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Fall 1974), 21-23.

*Trilogy of Desire*. Intro. Philip L. Gerber. New York: World, 1972. Rpt. in 3 vols. Apollo Editions. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1974.

## II. NEW DREISER STUDIES AND NEW STUDIES THAT INCLUDE DREISER

Baker, Monty R. "Theodore Dreiser: A Checklist of Dissertations and Theses," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Spring 1974), 12-21.

Baker lists 68 dissertations and 61 master's theses on or including Dreiser in the U.S. and overseas.

Calvert, Beverlee. "A Structural Analysis of *Jennie Gerhardt*," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Fall 1974), 9-11.

Calvert points out some parallels between the chapter divisions of the novel and the ages of Senator Brander and Lester Kane at the time of their decisions to leave Jennie and at their deaths.

Constantine, J. Robert. "Debs and Dreiser: A Note," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Spring 1974), 1-5.

Constantine presents three documents that shed light on the relationship between Dreiser and the labor leader Eugene Debs. The documents are excerpts from an essay written by Upton Sinclair for a volume of reminiscences of Debs and two letters from Dreiser to Debs concerning a controversy over a memorial to Paul Dresser.

Forrey, Robert. "Dreiser and the Prophetic Tradition," *American Studies*, 15 (Fall 1974), 21-35.

After noting that "it is possible to distinguish four types of religious responses: the ritualistic, the mystical, the apocalyptic and the prophetic," Forrey demonstrates how the religious spirit in Dreiser's columns in *Ev'ry Month* and, later, in his novels is prophetic. "It may be more accurate," concludes Forrey, "to see Dreiser coming out of the prophetic religious tradition than out of a literary tradition such as naturalism . . . ."

Gerber, Philip L. "Frank Cowperwood: Boy Financier," *Studies in American Fiction*, 2 (Autumn 1974), 165-74.

Gerber shows how Dreiser created Frank Cowperwood's boyhood, a period that was not well documented in his

sources on Yerkes' life, by "snaring resources from a variety of directions and amalgamating them into a believable life."

Graham, D. B. "Dreiser's Maggie," *American Literary Realism*, 7 (Spring 1974), 169-70.

Graham demonstrates how a scene at the end of chapter 4 in *Sister Carrie* in which a young man calls out "Say, Maggie" to Carrie "reveals in both style and theme the direct influence of Crane's [*Maggie/A Girl of the Streets*]."

Hamada, Masajiro. *Utopia to America Bungaku*. Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1973.

See review by Akiko Miyake in *American Literary Scholarship* 1973, ed. James Woodress (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 452-53.

Henderson, Harry B., III. *Versions of the Past: The Historical Imagination in American Fiction*. New York: Oxford, 1974.

As a part of this study, Henderson analyzes Dreiser's vision of history as it is revealed in his *Trilogy of Desire* and points out the similarities and differences between Cowperwood and the "progressive idea of the Great Man."

Hirsh, John C. "The Printed Ephemera of *Sister Carrie*," *American Literary Realism*, 7 (Spring 1974), 171-72.

Hirsh points out the symbolic significance of tickets, menus, newspapers and other printed ephemera in *Sister Carrie*. The ability to reach thousands -- but only for a moment -- which the steam press brought," concludes Hirsh, "typifies the brief encounters and transient relationships which are necessary for social progress, but which ultimately represent the source of Carrie's most profound discontent."

Karim, N. A. "Theodore Dreiser and the Quest for a Spiritual Identity," in *Literary Studies: Homage to Dr. A. Sivaramasubramonia Aiyer*. Ed. K. P. K. Menon, M. Manuel and K. Ayyappa Paniker. Trivandrum, India: Dr. A. Sivaramasubramonia Aiyer Memorial Committee, 1973. Pp. 141-48.

Disagreeing with critics who question the sincerity of *The Bulwark*, Karim argues that the novel "is the logical culmination of the spiritual quest which Dreiser began with *Sister Carrie*, and embodies the complete account of his final religious position."

Kehl, D. G. "Dreiser and the Winebrennarians," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Fall 1974), 5-9.

Kehl examines the significance in *An American Tragedy* of Dreiser's allusion to the presence of "some small religious organization or group--the Winebrennarians of Pennsylvania" at Grass Lake, the first place Clyde Griffiths took Roberta to drown her.

Kennell, Ruth E. "Airmail Interview," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Spring 1974), 6-11.

Ms. Kennell comments on various aspects of Swanberg's portrait of Dreiser, discusses the identity of Ernita in *A Gallery of Women* and explains why she likes *Chains* best from among Dreiser's works.

Lundén, Rolf. *The Inevitable Equation: The Antithetic Pattern of Theodore Dreiser's Thought and Art*. Diss. Uppsala, 1973. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1973.

In this study of Dreiser, Lundén presents what he considers the "basic pattern of 'Notes on Life,' the antithetic pattern," and shows how it is expressed in Dreiser's novels.

Lundquist, James. *Theodore Dreiser*. Modern Literature Monographs. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1974.

See review by D. B. Graham in *Dreiser Newsletter*, 6 (Spring 1975), 20-22.

Madison, Charles A. *Irving to Irving: Author-Publisher Relations, 1800-1974*. New York: R. R. Bowker, 1974.

Madison devotes a chapter to the history of Dreiser's troubled relations with his publishers.

Matveev, V. "Pis'ma T. Drajzera I. Anisimovu [Letters of T. Dreiser to I. Anisimov]," *Voprosy Literatury*, 17, No. 6 (1973), 193-99.

Following a brief introduction, Matveev translates four letters from Dreiser to Anisimov in which Dreiser gives some basic information about his publications. Written in Dec. 1939 and Jan. 1940, the letters are connected with the preparation of a projected 1940 edition of Dreiser's collected works to be published by Gosizdat. (MJD)

Moers, Ellen. "The Survivors: Into the Twentieth Century," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 20 (Jan. 1974), 1-10.

Using Dreiser as her main example, Moers sketches the characteristics of the artists who "grew up Victorian" but survived the turn of the century to create great works in the 1920s.

Mookerjee, R. N. *Theodore Dreiser: His Thought and Social Criticism*. Delhi, India: National Pub. House, 1974.

See review by Robert P. Saalbach in *Dreiser Newsletter*, 6 (Spring 1975), 14-20.

Okano, Hisaji. "A Spiritual Meaning in *Jennie Gerhardt*," in *Annual Reports of Studies*. Vol. 24. Kyoto, Japan: Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, 1973. Pp. 82-109.

Pizer, Donald. "'Along the Wabash': A 'Comedy Drama' by Theodore Dreiser," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Fall 1974), 1-4.

Pizer discusses the importance of a group of letters in the Copyright office of the Library of Congress which reveal that Dreiser considered writing a play entitled "Along the Wabash" in the spring and summer of 1895.

Rougé, Robert. *L'Inquiétude Religieuse dans le Roman Américain Moderne*. Publication de L'Université de Haute-Bretagne, 4. Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1974.

In a chapter on "Th. Dreiser et la Métamorphose du Reve," Rougé maintains that the strength of Dreiser's novels stems from the contradictions between reality and illusion, between a pagan love of life and an irrepressible puritanism, which, coming from Dreiser's personal experience and spiritual preoccupation, add to his works, especially the later ones, a certain religious dimension. (TH)

Roulston, Robert. "The Libidinous Lobster: The Semi-Flaw in Dreiser's Superman," *Rendezvous*, 9 (Spring 1974--Winter 1974-75), 35-40.

Roulston argues that *The Financier* and *The Titan* should be viewed "as elephantine critiques of American sexual and religious mores between the Civil War and the early years of the twentieth century" because Cowperwood "is . . . a potential giant who is prevented from achieving his full stature by a thoroughly unheroic puritanical society--a Lorenzo de Medici or a Cesare Borgia in a nation of sexually inhibited bookkeepers."

Rusch, Frederic E. "A Dreiser Checklist, 1973," *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Fall 1974), 12-20.

This checklist of the year's work on Dreiser in 1973 includes annotations of new publications and of reprints with new introductory matter.

Stein, Allen F. "Sister Carrie: A Possible Source for the Title," *American Literary Realism*, 7 (Spring 1974), 173-74.

Stein suggests that a popular Civil War song entitled "Sister Carrie" written by A. P. Peck may have served as the inspiration for the title of Dreiser's novel.

Terrier, Michel, *Individu et Société dans le Roman Américain de 1900 a 1940*. Etudes Anglaises 52. Paris: Didier, 1973.

In his critical survey of the individual and society in the American novel, Terrier discusses at some length the impact of the city on the individual in *Sister Carrie* and the condemnation of the city by the country in *An American Tragedy*. Numerous other comments on Dreiser *passim*. (TH)

Vogel, Dan. *The Three Masks of American Tragedy*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1974.

Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* is one of thirteen works Vogel examines in this study. Classifying the novel under the mask of Oedipus Tyranos (the other masks are Christ and Satan), Vogel concludes that it is not tragic because of the simplicity of the plot and of the nature of the hero, and because of the lack of purpose in Dreiser's naturalistic universe.

Voss, Arthur. *The American Short Story: A Critical Survey*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1973.

Voss's discussion of Dreiser consists of a series of brief critical comments on many of the stories in *Free and Other Stories* and *Chains*. He ends his survey by observing that Dreiser's shorter work "has obvious limitations . . . yet Dreiser succeeds nevertheless in leaving an impression on us, and few other short-story writers have written more powerfully and movingly on the theme of entrapment."

Woodress, James. *American Fiction, 1900-1950*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1974.

This reference book, which is vol. 1 in Gale's "American Literature, English Literature, and World Literatures in English: An Information Guide Series," includes a 6-page bibliographical essay on Dreiser.

### III. REPRINTS OF EARLIER DREISER STUDIES

Elias, Robert H. "Theodore Dreiser," in *Sixteen Modern American Authors*. Ed. Jackson R. Bryer. New York: Norton, 1973. Hardback ed. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1974. Pp. 123-79.

Frohock, W. M. *Theodore Dreiser*. Univ. of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers No. 102. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1972. Rpt. in *Seven Novelists in the American Naturalist Tradition: An Introduction*. Ed. Charles Child Walcutt. Minnesota Library on American Writers, Vol. 8. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1974. Pp. 92-130.

Lehan, Richard. *Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1969. Rpt. Arcturus Books. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1974.

*Literary History of the United States*. Ed. Robert E. Spiller, et al. 4th ed., rev. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1974.

The material on Dreiser has been reprinted from previous editions and supplements.

Mencken, H. L. "Minority Report: Third Series," *Menckiana*, No. 38 (Summer 1971), rpt. (excerpt) in *Dreiser Newsletter*, 5 (Spring 1974), 5.

Warren, Robert Penn. "An American Tragedy," *Yale Review*, 52 (Oct. 1962), rpt. in *Der Amerikanische in Roman im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Interpretationen*. Ed. Edgar Lohner. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1974. Pp. 152-61.

IV. ABSTRACTS OF DISSERTATIONS AND THESES  
ON AND INCLUDING DREISER

Bishoff, Robert Earl, Jr. "Changing Perspectives: 'An American Tragedy' from Literature to Film," *DAI*, 35 (1974), 440A (Massachusetts).

Crimmings, Constance Deane. "Some Women in Dreiser's Life and Their Portraits in His Novels," *MA*, 12 (1974), 270 (North Texas State).

Ehrlich, Carol. "Evolutionism and the Female in Selected American Novels, 1885-1900," *DAI*, 35 (1974), 399A (Iowa).

Hirshfield, Robert. "The Success Ethic in America and Its Effect Upon Four American Novelists," *DAI*, 35 (1974), 2991A-2992A (Nebraska).

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## DREISER SEMINAR AT MLA CONVENTION

One of the highlights of the 1975 MLA Convention in San Francisco should be the Dreiser seminar which will give the author recognition in the year which marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of *An American Tragedy* and the 30th anniversary of his death. In fact, the MLA has indicated that it will probably be able to schedule the seminar for Dec. 28, the exact date of his death.

Entitled "Perspectives on Dreiser Criticism: Present and Potential," the seminar will focus upon the problem of critical approaches to the novels of Dreiser and will seek to stimulate new thought--and perhaps thereafter written scholarship--by which the artistry of Dreiser as a writer may be more fully acknowledged and illuminated. The seminar aims not at reminiscences upon Dreiser the man but at an overdue sense of the serious challenge and potential of discovery in Dreiser's writings. The format of the seminar will be a panel discussion. During the final part of the meeting, comments by and discussion involving members of the audience will be welcome.

Chairman and discussion leader is Paul A. Orlov, Ph. D. student and part-time English instructor at the U. of Toronto. Panelists are: Prof. Richard D. Lehan, UCLA; Prof. William L. Phillips, U. of Washington, Seattle; Prof. Jack Salzman, Long Island U.; and Prof. Charles K. Shapiro, CUNY. Further information may be obtained from the chairman, Mr. Orlov, at: 321 Bloor St.-West, Apt. D435, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M 5 S 1 S 5.