DREISER STUDIES

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DREISER'S "POET OF POTTER'S FIELD"

T. D. Nostwich
Iowa State University

Anyone who wishes to study Dreiser's early newspaper writings is immediately confronted with the problem of identifying them. In the nearly three years that he worked for various papers he must have written several thousand news stories--most of them quite brief, to be sure--but only one of them has his by-line, "The Return of Genius," which, owing to an editor's quirky preference, is ascribed to "Carl" Dreiser. Lacking by-lines, his other stories have to be identified by various kinds of external and internal evidence, principally Dreiser's own mention of them in *Newspaper Days*. But only about 460 stories can be identified with any assurance on the basis of that book. Other sources of verification, however, are sometimes available, for example, reminiscences of people who knew Dreiser when he was a reporter. Such is the case with the story reprinted here.

In 1924 Harry Rosecrans Burke, a St. Louis newspaperman, published a volume of brief essays on local scenes and characters entitled *From the Day's Journey*. Included was an appreciative sketch, "Dreiser and the Riddle of the Sphinx," in which Burke muses over the novelist's admitted inability to find any meaning in life. In that sketch, Burke refers to Dreiser's account of his experiences as a reporter in St. Louis, published shortly before in *A Book About Myself* (later retitled *Newspaper Days*). Burke also quotes the recollections of several then-still-living newspapermen who had known Dreiser back in the early nineties when he was working for the *Globe-Democrat* and the *Republic*. One of these old-timers is a certain Captain Webb, who had been with the *Republic* when Dreiser was there. Webb's remarks are valuable not only for their indication of the paper's high regard for the young reporter but also for their identification of one of the best news stories he ever wrote.

> Captain Webb pictured him. Tall, rather thin, long hair. "He seemed to know what he was about," he said.

"A splendid writer. In those days all reporters wrote. But his copy stood out. I was night editor then and I remember it. Perhaps if he hadn't fulfilled the promise I might not now recall. There were others I have quite forgotten, but he was better as a writer than in getting news. Though you sent him for a 'story' and he might not get it, he always, as I recall, brought back some story. He had an inventive, fictional mind. But you must watch his copy. On a good 'story' he might get carried away from the facts by his own emotion. Or again, he might come in with a yarn you just knew didn't happen.

"I recall once his city editor sent him out on a 'story' somewhere near Forest Park. There was some city institution out in that neighborhood--I don't just now recall. No matter. Nor does it matter if the 'story' was about that institution. But Dreiser found a lot of old men sitting under the trees. And he wrote a story, when he returned, about a card game they were playing. Each of the four men around the table, he declared, was rapt in a different game, but they all played together and each took his particular credit as the cards fell, so that they got along quite famously, and none of the four realized that the others weren't playing the same game he was.

"Impossible, of course. But the way Dreiser wrote it it was a real story. And 'The Republic' printed it. Not as news. As a feature. What happened to the news 'story' he went out for I can't recall."[1]

The story referred to, the identity of which has eluded bibliographers until now, can be only "Poet of Potter's Field," a full-page Sunday feature printed on December 3, 1893. Captain Webb's recollection thirty years later blurs the details--causing him to change the number of people involved from three to four and to forget the exact locale--but his core memory of old men playing a zany game of cards in the vicinity of some city institution is clear and positive. And the only story carried in the *Republic* during Dreiser's time that has these details in it is the lively account reprinted here of three cronies who maintained the potter's field at the city poorhouse. Webb's remark by itself is thus sufficient to establish Dreiser's authorship quite conclusively, even though two additional bits of internal evidence also corroborate its attribution to him (see Notes 5 and 9).

We can only speculate as to what prompted Dreiser to write this story. By December 1893, as one of the *Republic's*

star reporters and feature writers, he had probably been told to bring in any newsworthy material he might come across rather than just waiting to be given assignments. Perhaps in this instance he had been asked to supply copy for the Sunday edition, and, casting about for something to write about, he may have recalled a good story he had written the preceding August about Joseph Gallagher, the stubborn and pugnacious superintendent of the St. Louis poorhouse.[2] Perhaps, then, looking into the possibility of a follow-up on Gallagher, he returned to the poorhouse where he came upon the three interesting caretakers of the graveyard. On the other hand, Webb's implication that Dreiser brought in this particular story instead of one he had been specifically told to write makes it possible also to speculate that he might have been assigned to do another Gallagher story but was so taken by the human interest possibilities in the potter's field material that the original assignment had to be relegated to the concluding section, as we have it here.

Whatever circumstances led to the writing of this story, the melancholy topic of the friendless, forgotten dead lying in neglected graves was apparently quite congenial to Dreiser at this period in his life. Morgues, burials, and graveyards figure in more than a half-dozen "Heard in the Corridors" paragraphs written for the *Globe-Democrat* as well as in at least six feature stories for the *Chicago Globe*, the *St. Louis Republic*, and the *Pittsburg Dispatch*.[3] His fancying such sad topics may have been a symptom of the gloominess and sense of fatality that he says, in *Newspaper Days*, frequently afflicted him in early manhood, unloosing fears of failure and intense anxiety over the brevity of life. Apparently he was fascinated by human wreckage like the three seedy caretakers, the flotsam of society, men who had been cast out of or had drifted out of the mainstream to spend their days circling idly and pointlessly in the backwaters of life. When Dreiser wrote about these three men, as when he wrote of Hurstwood falling from buoyant self-assurance into hopeless anomie or of several figures in *Twelve Men* going to untimely deaths despite their youth, high talents, and zest for life, he was probably writing out of the fear that he himself could someday be defeated and broken by life.

True, in 'Poet of Potter's Field' he presents the characters of Logan, Toler, and Sullivan in a way to amuse Sunday readers. Details like the flagrant euchring of poor addled Toler and Logan's delightful, unintentionally droll doggerel give the inherently lugubrious subject a charming whimsical quality. But for all Dreiser's arch, occasionally patronizing manner the story is also suffused with a melancholy eloquence, expressive of the young man's pitying

sense of old humanity, that touches readers even today. Indeed, the story of these three beaten old men foreshadows the moving portrayals of old Gerhardt, the fathers of Frank Cowperwood and Clyde Griffiths, and that of Dreiser's own father in *Dawn* and *Newspaper Days*.

'Poet of Potter's Field' is reprinted here from a microfilm owned by the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago. It is faithfully transcribed except for the omission of subheadlines and the correction of eight minor typographical and punctuation errors.

[From the *St. Louis Republic*, 3 December 1893: 9.]

POET OF POTTER'S FIELD.

Of all places upon earth the seeker after amusement would look last in a cemetery. The city of the dead has, as a rule, within its limits no feature calculated to inspire mirth. It is not a lively place. One may wander up and down its silent streets and find nothing to cause even a smile, unless it be, perhaps, some quaint epitaph engraved by some well-meaning but eccentric friend as a tribute to the dead.

A graveyard, be it ever so well kept, is a gloomy place. And more gloomy and desolate is that tenement district of the great city of sleepers, the potter's field. Here lie, in graves unmarked save by a wooden headboard, uncared for after the mound is once formed, the unknown dead or those to whom, in most instances, death came as a relief from a miserable existence.

Not a place to look for humor, one would say; and yet our potter's field, at least, furnishes a story which, to some people, is grimly humorous. It is a humor with that minor strain of pathos without which there is no true comedy.

This spot is just southwest of the Poor Farm buildings in the southwestern portion of the city. It is a plain five-acre plat of ground overrun with weeds, above which rise the plain, unpainted headboards of the city's unnamed and unclaimed dead.

Paupers they were at their death, yet not all had been penniless through life, nor did all come from the slums. Some have been men and women whom the world had at one time delighted to honor. Misfortunes, self-brought or sent by fate, had lowered them from their high estate. Only the other day there was buried in the St. Louis potter's field a direct heir to a title of nobility. On his name there was no stain. Political changes had exiled him from his native land, and

circumstances with which he could not cope had done the rest.

In two places only within the limits of the graveyard is the level, dreary waste broken--once by a small whitewashed frame building, known as the deadhouse, and again by another equally small whitewashed frame structure, the abode of the keeper of the field. Besides these two structures nothing but weeds and pine headboards seem to flourish, though in the distance the eye encounters, even at this period of the year, some pleasant woodland scenery.

The name potter's field has a history. It is found first in the book of Matthew. The 30 pieces of silver for which Judas Iscariot betrayed his master were used to purchase a vacated potter's field south of Jerusalem in which to bury the poor. Whether the purchase in question was the first of the kind cannot be ascertained; but it was not the last.

The workers in plain biscuit clay, the kind so abundant throughout Asia Minor, found it plentiful in certain localities.[4] When a field had become exhausted it was abandoned. When once abandoned the spot lay bare and unsightly with no earth of any fertility. Most of these desolate fields refused subsistence to the most hardy and noxious weeds while others permitted of vile growths so unsightly as to be even more abhorrent than the barren, forsaken space.

It was such a spot as this that the blood money of Iscariot went to purchase, and it was there that those unhappy mortals whose poverty precluded the possibility of religious burial were taken and interred.

From Palestine the idea spread, and, though the plats of ground purchased as a burial place for the poor were not all potter's fields, the name clung to them even until the present day.[5]

The St. Louis field is not an improvement upon those elsewhere in the world. The lack of gold in the lives of the unfortunates buried here follows them even in death. Its absence has removed from their very graves the pleasant beauty apparent in other burial spots.

AN ODD TRIO.

"Digged by a pauper, blessed by a fool," are these graves in the St. Louis potter's field.

There are peculiar features connected with this lonely place--features possessed of drollery and pathos. There are some strange meetings at the city's cemetery, and some odd specimens of humanity have here their residence and place of employment.

The field is under the jurisdiction of the Overseer of the Poor. It is from the Poor Farm that most of the bodies come for burial. And, too, from the Poor Farm come those who help lay away their brothers in poverty.

To the east of the potter's field stands the great Insane Asylum Building, crowning the crest of a hill, and a little further north stands the Female Hospital and the straggling frame dwellings that bring up St. Louis to the neighboring roadway. From this main highway a roadbed of cinders skirts the west side of the Poorhouse and, running south, traverses the potter's field, through its eastern half, to its utmost southern limits.

Along this road the two cottages stand within the field, a stone's throw from one another, the only residences upon this avenue. In one dwells Robert Hume Logan, the present keeper, who, strange to say, besides being a dependent of the farm claims to be a descendent of Hume, the historian of England, and a relative of Canon Hume of Liverpool.[6] Besides this, Logan was once a prosperous whisky wholesaler of Belfast, Ireland, has been a wide and extensive traveler and now, broken, at the age of 47, writes poetry and superintends the burial of paupers. The habit of whisky drinking long since mastered him and brought him to his present position.

Logan is assisted by Toler, a half-witted inmate of the Poorhouse, who digs the graves for the daily arrivals at the field. Joseph Gallagher, the Workhouse superintendent, says that once when the southern limit of the field had been reached Toler's mania suddenly turned in the direction of endless gravedigging. He became possessed of the idea that he was the owner of all the land about and insisted that he was going to dig graves on every inch of it. The poor fool really started in and dug a great line of graves extending over a block in length before he was stopped by the superintendent.

"The only way I could get him free of the idea," said Mr. Gallagher, "was to lock him up for an entire week. By that time the idea had left him. Why, do you know, the entire line of graves was dug on the survey of a proposed street, and I had to have them all filled up at once."

Toler is all right now. Since that time he has never

allowed his imagination to float out into boundless graveyard possibilities.

A third companion at Logan's is Jack, a very dissipated and enfeebled Irishman, who assists generally about the field. Jack positively has no qualities, good or bad, unless it is that of a passive quietude that constantly possesses him. He is noted for gazing into the fire by the hour while Toler and Logan talk, never interrupting with a word one way or the other.

In Logan's little hut next to the deadhouse these three meet daily, play euchre, swap opinions, drink beer when they can afford it and keep warm. There happens to be very little work of any kind whatsoever, and so these meetings are frequent and long-drawn out. Yet they are in a way unsatisfactory, for they never have quite enough money to drink all they wish and, of course, none with which to gamble.

All three depend on the exertions of the kindly Logan for their luxuries. Logan, whenever someone comes around after long months and looks up some dead and buried pauper, spruces up and prepares to make a little money. Should the visitor go further and order a certain body exhumed preparatory to a removal to some other place of rest, he pays Logan $3 for the work and then there is feasting in the keeper's hut. It's just the quaintest, most unobtrusive sort of feasting that anyone would desire to look at, for beer and tobacco are the luxuries and smoke and song are the only results.

One wonders, in looking at Logan's little box car-shaped residence, how in all consciousness he can be merry and content. Sometimes he says that he is only marching forward to one of the uncared-for graves outside. Yet, with all that black array of wooden boards without, raising their somber heads above a dreary waste of weeds, Logan is happy.

Then, at times, when the distant city is hung with a myriad of lights and the great institutions near at hand flame lamps from a thousand windows, the environment seems beautiful. A great peace settles down, and, despite the remembrance of the day, one imagines that even here in the lone, unkempt potter's field, a dreary life-burden might be gladly laid down and the eternal sleep of peace begun with a sigh of relief and a whispered prayer.

TOLER NEVER WINS.

The casual visitor to the potter's field would probably

find one of this trio tramping, rain or shine, in a faded blue soldier's coat, along the desolate cinder path; another day and he might meet a second fiqure, a crippled Hibernian, wending his way stolidly along the path towards the Poorhouse at the close of day.

The third personage would be that of a gray-headed, shaggy-bearded Scotchman, stout of build, slightly bent, looking out from his cabin door, or bending interestedly over some writing material--should the visitor enter the shanty--writing a poem.

The first of these is Toler, the gravedigger. The second is Jack, "Irish Jack," or Mr. Sullivan, whose career has secured him an abiding place at the Poorhouse, and who interests himself in potter's field work for the company it affords. The third is Robert Hume Logan, the poet keeper, whose abode, besides being the official keeper's hut, is a rendezvous for both Toler and Sullivan.

At this season of the year, when Logan's stove is constantly blazing with soot-producing coal, and his solitary oil lamp is kept well filled and in excellent trim, his two companions daily while away the hours together. Euchre is a favorite pastime, and many a game has been won and lost over the small wooden table which is at the north side of the room. Every available sheet of paper, not excluding those on which keeper Logan has poured forth his poetic flourishes, are completely covered with orderly phalanxes of points scored.

A game of euchre, three-handed, as played by three men, guardians of the graveyard, has some queer features. The worthy Toler is not much of a hand at turning tricks, nor at keeping them safe after he has turned them. The ordinary course of a game, which requires something of fairness, when played by two such sly dogs as Logan and Jack, must naturally bring the unwitting Toler a few points, but the ordinary course of such a game does not prevent his losing the points after he gets them.

The two others keep sharp eyes upon one-another, but they spare many a moment from their watching that they may together plunder Toler. Of all this Toler remains in blissful ignorance.

The scheme, whenever a game lags, is to assure Toler that he has absolutely not made a point in the last hand and then divide what should have been credited to him between them. When Toler, by good fortune, euchres his worthy companions, blank astonishment does not follow. There is no confusion.

The usual remark comes from Logan:

"I made two this time and you (meaning Jack) made one."

"Come, come, " says Jack, "I made two and you made one."

"Oh, now, let's not quarrel. The next time three is made you shall have two and I'll take one."

"But," interrupted Toler, whose comprehension is sorely puzzled, "didn't I make three points? I euchred you two."

"Oh, no; no you didn't. You didn't make anything. It's Jack, you know, who made one and I made two. No, indeed; you didn't make any," with which Toler is compelled to be satisfied and the game proceeds.

Once Toler made three points and a division of spoils was at once begun by his companions. It so happened, however, that Toler that day was blessed with a peculiarly strong faculty for reasoning. The game was lagging and Jack announced, with much grave suavity, that he had made two points.

"But you didn't, though," Logan is reported to have said; "I made 'em."

"No," answered Jack, "they are mine."

At this point, when a division was imminent, Toler remarked:

"No such thing; I made 'em and I'm going to keep 'em"; which remark, being further embellished with several emphatic expressions so astonished the haughty Triumvirs of the first and second degree, that it caused the original argument to sink into insignificance. Furthermore, it induced an immediate and peaceful adjournment until such time as Toler's scintillating think should depart from him and cast him back into his natural condition of submission.

At another time Toler grew unruly because of a proposed change in the order of grave digging. Toler wanted to dig continuously south and the Superintendent of the Poorhouse evinced a desire to have him remain within the limits of the city's property. The result was a division without compromise and Toler was forced to succumb.[7]

With his defeat came a disregard of old ties and a haughty disdain of old associates. Euchre was beneath him and

the warmth of Logan's stove was ignored. Recognition was out of the question, and for whole days at a stretch he stalked resolutely by the keeper's door without so much as glancing within. The separation continued until the obdurate idea wore away, after which the old conditions were resumed. As a concluding tribute to Toler's worth of character it may be stated that never once in the history of his grave-digging career has he been known to win a single game of euchre.

LOGAN'S LONGINGS

Withal, though through the habit of years Logan has come to lead his lonesome life with that stolidity which is an excellent counterfeit of content, there is a thread of dissatisfaction--rather regret--through it all. The memory of the busy life that once was his cannot be effaced, though with passing years its outline may grow more dim and its recollection less painful. At times in a reminiscent mood, the lethargy which has gradually infolded him will be for the moment thrown aside and to some sympathetic visitor the white-haired old man will reveal a latent longing for the world. Then he quotes poetry. At times it is his own, but upon one occasion it was Longfellow's lines:

> I see the lights of the city
> Gleam through the rain and the mist,
> And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
> That my soul cannot resist.

"And yet, " he continued, "it's not a sadness that is acute. It is more a vague remembrance and regret, as--

> A feeling of sadness and longing,
> A feeling akin to pain,
> That resembles sorrow only
> As the mist resembles rain.[8]

He realizes that he is the broken branch that forever circles peacefully round and round in some little pool, while near by rushes the great river.[9]

His present life is so still, so placid, its monotony remains so unbroken that anything, of whatsoever nature, is most gladly welcomed as a relief. The constant tramp of Toler, the gravedigger, ever marching in his faded army great coat of blue, upon the cinder roadway without, is watched with a certain relief. His steps, in moments of extreme idleness and want of amusement, have been counted by Logan, until the

gray fact can tell just how long it will take the youth to walk from the deadhouse to the gate and how many steps he will take.

Every hour, approximately, says Logan, Toler will deign to cease his marching and counter-marching and will enter the hut to get warm. In the summer time this condition is reversed, and Toler relaxes for a few moments' rest in the shade.

Some of the dreary hours in the keeper's hut are spent in writing poetic effusions. The potter's field would not be among the first places one would think of going to in search of a poetic nature. And yet Logan writes poetry. It is not entirely bad poetry, either, and includes much pleasant sentiment as well as considerable beauty of phraseology.

To certain sorts of writing the potter's field might be conducive. Sorrow, futile reaching after that which is irretrievably lost, songs of sickness and death, of blighted lives and dwarfed reasons, of charity forgotten and hope decayed, of withered hearts and loves long buried; all these might well be written there and written well. But poetry of a lighter vein would certainly not be expected. It is such, however, that Logan has composed and only occasionally may a line be found indicating in a faint manner the ordinary feeling of the author.

It was in Logan's hut, when one of those incomprehensible and mystic games of euchre were in progress, that Logan remarked:

"I've written a poem recently."

The visitor wished to hear it. The game was stopped immediately. While Logan searched beneath a pile of greasy papers for the effusion, Toler and Jack took unto themselves aspects of profound comprehension and awaited silently the result of the search. Logan drew forth from the utmost depths of a stack of brown,, much-soiled sheets of foolscap paper, a slip similar to the rest and held it admiringly as he exclaimed:

"Ha! I have it! 'Away to the Gold Fields'; that's the title. 'Away to the Gold Fields.'"

Logan betook himself to a box stationed before the north window, through which came a feeble gray twilight, and seating himself with his back to the light that he might better make out the feeble ink characters, he began, with his

gruff Scotch accent, to read as follows:

Away to the gold fields, away love with me!
Where's riches in plenty, together we'll be.
I'll work for thee during the long summer day;
Then away to the gold fields with me, love, away!

I'll dig for thee gladly, in th' 'ope I may meet
With a bright gleaming nugget to lay at thy feet;
For one of thy smiles, dear, all toil will repay;
Then away to the gold fields with me, love, away.

I'll deck thee in gems that are richest and rare,
Should fortune vouchsafe me her blessings to share.
Thy loftiest wish slaves shall straightway obey;
Then away to the gold fields with me, love, away!

And after the toil, love, content I will be,
In some blessed spot, alone save with thee;
Where thought shall be pleasure and pleasure the day;
Then away to the gold fields with me, love, away.

HISTORY IN RHYME.

At the conclusion there was a temporary quiet born of the expectancy of criticisms. Toler, with a most comically simple impulse, looked around the intervening stovepipe at the visitor to see just what effect had been made upon him. Jack stirred nervously on his box and looked at Logan. The latter beamed over the foolscap's top and waited.

The pause was growing painful, when it was relieved by the visitor's assurance that the verse was good. (With the mental proviso that it was not altogether bad.)

"I'm glad you think so, " said the keeper. "I thought it might not be bad. I wrote it in off moments, you know; just now and again, you see. I've nothing else to do."

"Have you any others?"

"Well, now, I'd like to read you the one about my travels, if you wouldn't mind. It's quite long, though."

Logan was assured of an attentive audience and produced his history in rhyme. When it was read it proved little more than had been expected, but there were lines and rhymes in it too delightfully unique to let pass without notice. The poem is far from being worth serious comment, and yet as a record

of Logan's career it is interesting.

The first verse of the poem is humorous in view of the poetic license used and because of its lack of the best poetic sense, yet, being the first verse, it is necessary to an elucidation of what follows:

> When first I started on my trip my health was very bad;
> "I'd long been sadly suffering, it was the 'bron' I had.[10]
> "The doctors all with one accord agreed that I must go,
> "To bask beneath the sunny skies of Californio."

Having once reached this decision the poet relates that he took ship from Liverpool for Quebec, and from there started west to view the Rocky Mountains. These moved him to sing:

> Its pine woods and its forests;
> Its waterfalls and streams;
> Its snow-capped peaks agleaming
> Beneath the sun's bright beams;
> Its wild and beauteous scenery
> Of green and russet brown;
> Its wildering streams that, rushing, roar
> The rocky slopes adown.

Logan goes farther and describes the "sheltered vale," as well as the Western pioneers. Then he tells how he got to Manitoba, the Pacific Ocean and later Vancouver's Island.

The traveler went north to Victoria and camped with the Eskimos; then turned south and, in a verse or two, lands in San Francisco. The Golden Gate and other sights get a verse each, as well as "Its landlocked harbor," within whose confines all nations' flags are found; after which the poet sweeps away in poetic swaths to the city of San Diego.

The traveler stopped while at San Diego at the Hotel del Coronado. It must have been an excellent hotel, for he says:

> For choice accommodation,
> And that without bravado,
> There's few, indeed, can ere surpass
> The grand "del Coronado."

The Eastern belle, who winters in that charming locality, receives the most ludicrous touching up that ever jingled in rhyme or reason.

> Here, resting for a season,
> We find the Eastern beauty,

Who, to avoid the wintry gales,
Doth seek asylum here;
And, fearful of her dainty health,
Considers it her duty
To renovate her system for
The gayeties next year.

From Diego it was only a short trip to Los Angeles, and the city of Mexico, requiring in all, a pilgrimage of less than two stanzas. Once in Mexico, however, he developed dry historical knowledge, and in rhyme compared the Western Empire to the glory of the Court of Solomon. He came back by way of Texas and reached Colorado's capital one fine morning in time to look it over. That city receives a compliment. He says:

For a handsome, quiet city,
Free from riot and disorder,
One would judge from its appearance
That it had been built to order.

Leaving Denver he came to St. Louis, which he terms the "Empress City of the Plain." Hard luck overtook him, however, in the form of sickness and other evils. There was no work to be had, as he sadly describes in the last stanza of all:

In vain I roamed the city,
But no luck there was in store,
So I took me to the Poorhouse;
Only this and nothing more.[11]
Of the potter's field I'm keeper;
Here I work and here I sleep,
For my neighbors, grave and silent,
Long my lonely watch I keep.

IN CONFIDENCE.

They are companions, these three, but it is through force of circumstances rather than choice. This is proved by the opinions that each holds of the others and which were expressed to the visitor in confidence.

Logan has the opinion that Toler is a fool, but that he is a great deal smarter than he appears to be, which does not mean that he is possessed of too much wisdom. Jack, he says, is a fair sort of a fellow, has traveled some, but is not intellectually the equal of him--Logan.

Toler likes his companions "well enough," but he does not

give them much thought. He is possessed of the idea that all the surrounding land is his and that upon it graves innumerable must be dug.

Jack Sullivan, the aged Hibernian, is not so interesting as Logan nor so uncompanionable as Toler. He was engaged in a street confab one dreary afternoon not long since, and passed a few opinions upon the character of his associates.

"I loike Logan well enough," said Jack. "He is good enough an' kin play cards. Dthin, too, he has traveled, loike mesilf, an' he wrote poetry. To be chsure I dawn't undershtand his poetry, but dthin that dawn't matter. Chsure I be visitin' him wanst in awhoile, playin' cards and dthe loike, but dthat's all, dthat's all."

"How about Toler?"

"Toler? Oh, go away wid yez. Toler! He's daft, ye know. Sometimes he's all roight and sometimes he's all wrong. I dawnt be carin' much about Toler, now moind yez."

"You get tired living out here, don't you? It's rather dreary."

"Dreary! It's roight yez are. Dreary; ha! dthat's the namein' of it, to be chsure. Dthere be nothin' doin' from mornin' till avenin', and I get dthat lonesome chure I doan know what's to become ave me. "

"Why! Don't you spend your time with Logan?"

"That gets toiresome, too, moind ye. It's not cards a man waants to be after playin' dthe livelong day, d'yez dthink?"

"No, not exactly; but then its better than nothing."

"And dthat's sayin' little enough," grumbled Jack, as he pulled his faded coat collar up about his ears and headed for the Poorhouse.

THAT MAN JANSEN.

A strip of land on the extreme east side has recently been plowed up and bodies are now buried there. The strip is about 100 feet wide and runs north and south the entire length of the five acres. There were vague rumors going around

recently that the city had refused to purchase more space for the charity graveyard and, instead,, had decided to begin in the oldest section of the field to plow the old graves under and begin anew, the idea being economy. However true or untrue this may be, neither Gallagher, the present superintendent nor his keeper, Logan, knew anything of the matter.

Along with the many troubles that overtook the now famous Gallagher as Superintendent of the Poor Farm there came once a man by the name of George Jansen, a Dane, who lives some distance south of the Poor Farm and the potter's field. This Jansen was possessed of the wordly blessing of five acres of land adjoining the paupers' field, which he held in fee simple. Now Jansen, perhaps, leaned up against the fence that incloses the potter's field and, looking over, had speculated on that indefinite period of time when the potter's field should be no more and his land should consequently regain its actual value and general financial composure. It is to be believed that if Mr. Jansen so speculated he turned away gloomy and sore, burdened with the thought that his land should be long in regaining its natural value, and filled with the thought that paupers' fields were nuisances anyhow, and not to be tolerated alongside of the land of struggling citizens, to their general detriment and financial ruin.

At any rate, whatever Mr. Jansen's original ideas were once upon a time last summer he became possessed of an idea. He at last found that he knew what to do with the said apparently valueless five acres. He would forthwith proceed to sell said plat to the city, that it might be added and used as a potter's field annex.

With this purpose he proceeded to visit Joseph Gallagher. According to Mr. Gallagher, Jansen said:

"Now, I've five acres right adjoining the potter's field, and it is good land. That potter's field is there, though, and I want to get rid of the land. Now, if you will aid me in selling it to the city as an extension of the potter's field--if you push the matter, I'll make it all right with you. You do this and you'll not lose anything."

Such conversation as this was not much out of the ordinary to Colonel Gallagher, for as he once told *The Republic* it seemed as though everybody around the Poorhouse was scheming to do up the city. Still it was out of the ordinary practice of the great unbounceable's category of virtues, and he proceeded figuratively to walk upon the expectant Jansen in such a manner as should have proved a

lasting lesson and a cure.[12]

The paupers' field was soon after found to be filled completely with graves. The Board of Health was notified and Dr. Homan ordered that an eastern strip of the field being used as a cabbage garden be plowed up and bodies buried there. With this order Gallagher complied, but Jansen was looking over the fence at the south and was watching him. The worthy Jansen was scheming. His land had not been sold, and yet here was the city encroaching upon the Poor Farm's truck garden plots to make room for the pauper dead; and worse, here was the obstinate, pig-headed Gallagher doing nothing more nor less than aiding the city to so encroach and save a little money. The sight made the truly good Jansen's blood boil, especially standing on his own five acres as he was.

It was not long after this that a letter came from the Board of Health stating that the board had been informed that the unbounceable was plowing up the graves of a number of departed paupers to make room for new ones. When Gallagher read this he placed his right forefinger to his most worthy nose and swore that he knew just where the accusation came from.

"That's Jansen," said Gallagher, and, climbing into his official buggy, he repaired to the office of Dr. Homan and made an explanation.[13]

"I told him," said Gallagher, a few days ago, "the whole history of that charge. I told him how Jansen came to me and then I explained that I had only been Superintendent a year or two, yet for 20 years previous to my coming that eastern strip of the potter's field had been used as a truck garden. I explained that I couldn't be certain that bodies had not once been buried there; that some person even discovered a few bones at the north end of it about a year previous, but that was all. If the land was ever used as a burial place, I said there was no record of it, and asked how I could be held responsible. Besides, the land was there and vacant. If bodies had ever been there no one could ever know it now, and why not bury bodies there again, so as to maintain the sacredness of the entire field instead of raising cabbages on a part of it; and that, too, over dead men's bones? When I got through I was told to go ahead, and I'm going ahead. The city will get along without Jansen's five acres, too, I think, for a few years yet, anyhow."

Talking on the same subject, Logan, the keeper, said that it was true that some bones had been unearthed at the north end which might indicate that once there had been bodies buried there, but there was to him no certainty of it.

There isn't much ceremony about a burial in the field nowadays. When one of the poor patients passes away, a plain box is prepared and he is placed within. In turn this case is placed upon a plain wooden truck and hauled down along the cinder road to where Toler has prepared the grave. Then that strange combination of the poet-keeper, the simpleton, the wreck, gather about, lower the body and pile on the earth.

The burial is over; there is no funeral. One more unfortunate has exchanged certain misery for an unknown eternity. There is one more mound to be marked by a pine headboard to furnish a fertile bed for weeds. And the trio adjourns to the whitewashed hut and the interrupted game of euchre.

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[1]*From the Day's Journey: A Book of By-Paths and Eddies About Saint Louis* (St. Louis: Wm. Henry Miner, 1924) 167-68.

[2]"Gallagher," *St. Louis Republic* August 1893: 9.

[3]All of the "Heard in the Corridors" paragraphs ascribable to Dreiser can be found in my forthcoming edition of them to be published by the Iowa State University Press. The feature stories are 1) "Fate of the Unknown," *Chicago Globe* 11 September 1893: 3; 2) "Chamber of Horrors," *St. Louis Republic* 7 November 1893: 6; 3) "The Chinese in St. Louis," *St. Louis Republic* 14 January 1894: 15; 4) "Entombed Chinaman Chue," *Pittsburg Dispatch* 15 May 1894: 3; 5) "In Old Hancock Street," *Pittsburg Dispatch* 18 July 1894: 3; 6) "With the Nameless Dead," *Pittsburg Dispatch* 23 July 1894: 3. Nos. 1, 3, and 6 will appear in *Journalism, Volume 1* (1988) of the University of Pennsylvania Edition of Theodore Dreiser."

[4]Biscuit Clay is used to make bisque pottery.

[5]See Matthew 27.7. "With the Nameless Dead" (cited in note 3) closely paraphrases Dreiser's brief account of potter's field: "In the first potter's field, near ancient Jerusalem, which was a potter's field in reality, having been hollowed out by molders of clay and forsaken when there was no more clay to mold, they buried the plague-stricken and the lifeless unclean. Those 30 pieces of silver that bought Jesus went to buy that desolate abode of the poor which travelers look on nowadays with awe. It was about the most barren-looking district in all Canaan, and all other potter's fields seem to partake of the same quality."

[6]Hume, the historian of England is David Hume (1711-1776), the Scottish Philosopher who wrote *History of England During Reigns of James I and Charles I* (1754). Canon Hume is not identified in standard biographical reference works.

[7]division disagreement; difference of opinion.

[8]An inexact quotation of stanzas 2 and 3 of "The Day is Done."

[9]the broken branch . . . the great river This metaphor was closely echoed by Dreiser later in "Reapers in the Fields," a feature story he wrote for the *Pittsburg Dispatch* 23 July 1894: 3. "down by the river's brink Irving's 'straw' floated lazily round and round in a small, still pool." He is referring to the seventh paragraph of Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow": "They are like those little nooks of still water, which border a rapid stream, where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbour, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current."

[10]'bron' Presumably bronchitis.

[11]Only this and nothing more. See Poe's "The Raven," line 6.

[12]In "Gallagher" the Superintendent is dubbed "the Unbounceable" because he refused to vacate his office when the Board of County Commissioners appointed by a new mayor relieved him of his position and stopped his salary.

[13]In "Gallagher" Dr. Homan is identified as the Health Commissioner of St. Louis.

DREISER:

INDIANA'S FORGOTTEN AUTHOR?

Richard W. Dowell
Indiana State University

In *A Hoosier Holiday* (1916), while narrating his Indiana experiences during the late summer of the preceding year, Dreiser reconstructed a conversation with a former neighbor in Warsaw, Mrs. McConnell. After learning that Dreiser was an author, Mrs. McConnell, who seemed primarily impressed by the car he was a passenger in, had asked,

> "And so you're a writer? Well, what do you write? Novels?"
>
> "Well, some people condescend to call them that," I answered. "I'd hesitate to tell you what some others call them."
>
> "It's funny I never heard of any of 'em. What's the names of some of 'em?"
>
> I enlightened her.
>
> "Well, now that's strange. I never heard of one of them--I must get two or three and see how you write."
>
> "That's good of you," I chuckled, in the best of spirits.

Dreiser's spirits darkened, however, when Mrs. McConnell, reminded of literature, turned the discussion to the merits of another Hoosier writer, Gene Stratton Porter, whose novel *Laddie* (1913) was in the process of selling one and a half million copies. Mrs. McConnell reminded Dreiser that Mrs. Porter was worth four or five hundred thousand dollars and had her works prominently displayed in the local bookstores. Wounded by the implied contrast to his success, Dreiser changed the subject. "I could see by the stress she laid on the four or five hundred thousand dollars and the stacks of books in the local store that my type of authorship would never appeal to her" (320-21).

This exchange typified Dreiser's sense of his literary stature in the state of his birth. The masses, he felt, were unaware of his work, and the others were offended by it,

including poet James Whitcomb Riley. Though Dreiser admired Riley and wished to meet him, he felt unwelcome and chose to remain in the car outside Riley's Indianapolis home rather than risk an embarrassing encounter. "We didn't go in. I wanted to, but I felt a little bashful. As I say, I had heard that he didn't approve of me" (386).

When Dreiser returned to Indiana in 1919, at the invitation of his former Warsaw school teacher, May Calvert Baker, his visit again stirred little local interest, except among Mrs. Baker's immediate circle. As W.A. Swanberg summed up the statewide indifference, literary societies made no demands on his time; his birthplace, Terre Haute, extended no invitation; the major newspapers were noticeably silent; and his writings were so generally absent from the Indiana bookstores that Mrs. Baker offered to promote interest throughout the state by traveling to various communities and circulating information about his books (238-240). Even as late as 1936, when Mrs. Baker again asked him to visit her should he return to Indiana to participate in the Paul Dresser Memorial Committee's dedication of a landscaped park in Terre Haute, Dreiser responded that if invited by the Committee, he would come; however, he noted, "I have never been invited to participate in any way" (Swanberg, 438).

These and similar incidents have led biographers to view Dreiser as a neglected writer in Terre Haute specifically and Indiana generally. For example, Swanberg's *Dreiser* contains the photograph of a historical marker identifying the birthplace of Paul Dresser. The caption of that photograph reads: "The far greater brother is forgotten in Terre Haute."

Certainly in the early stages of Dreiser's career, his sense of neglect was justified, for he was unable to compete with the success of writers who made up what literary historian Arthur Shumaker has termed "the Golden Age of Indiana literature" (195). This period began with the publication of Edward Eggleston's *Hoosier Schoolmaster* in 1871 and lasted until the third decade of the twentieth century. During these years, Indiana's literary reputation was first enhanced by the tremendous popularity of Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* (1880) and the poetry of James Whitcomb Riley. Then, between 1899 and 1929, Charles Major, Maurice Thompson, George Barr McCutcheon, Booth Tarkington, Gene Stratton Porter and Meredith Nicholson combined to place thirty-one novels on the *Publishers Weekly* best-sellers lists and move Indiana into second place behind New York in the production of popular literature.[1] Virtually all of these authors were romantic in temperament and choice of subject matter, giving their readers chivalric adventures, mythical kingdoms, nostalgic returns to

childhood and sentimentalized portraits of rustic Indiana. Even when they dealt with contemporary problems, they typically did so with good humor and complete faith that hard work, honesty and trust in God would prevail, while evil and indolence would be defeated or reformed. Readers who wanted to close their books feeling that all was well in a relatively simple world could depend on the Indiana authors of the "Golden Age."

The works of these writers spawned numerous Hoosier anthologies and became a source of great pride for Indiana's literary critics and cultural historians, who showcased the state's achievements at every opportunity. Then came Theodore Dreiser, who wrote of the darker side of human existence, of men and women driven by their lusts and ambitions, of an amoral universe in which the basic virtues were generally inoperative. He had no humorous or nostalgic tales to tell. He did not transport his readers to a never-never land, nor did he promise them a comfortable resolution of life's many problems. As a result, Dreiser simply did not seem to fit the Hoosier tradition and was not eagerly embraced by its caretakers--the state's historians, anthologizers, critics and occasionally public school administrators. Even the devoted May Calvert Baker had her reservations, expressed in a letter dated May 29, 1918: "That your books are true, I never doubted, but we have to see so much of tragedy in real life, why not give us some nice idealistic things to read about" (Swanberg, 238).

At first, it was easy to ignore Dreiser, for the commercial failure of *Sister Carrie* and the long hiatus from fiction writing that followed made it unnecessary to include him in any appraisal or collection of Indiana literature. By 1916, however, when Minnie Olcott Williams assembled her anthology, *Indiana Authors*, Dreiser had published eight books and a considerable number of short stories, poems, plays and essays; however, he was not included among the 121 Hoosier writers that made up the collection. Presumably, Miss Williams could not find a selection among Dreiser's grim portrayals that she felt was representative of the "beautiful flowers and plants and trees within the garden of Indiana literature" (vii).

That same year, however, the publication of *A Hoosier Holiday* made Dreiser more difficult to ignore in Indiana, for he had not only presented himself to the world as a Hoosier but also made some assessments of his native state that could not go unchallenged. In general, his visit to Indiana had awakened nostalgic memories and renewed his appreciation of the natural beauty. He declared his home state "simple,

unpretentious, not indifferent but quiescent,--a happy land of farms and simple industries which can scarcely be said to have worked any harm to any man" (336). Yet, even in his praise there was a condescension that angered many loyal Hoosiers. He spoke of their "loutish country saloons" (268), of small-town lawyers "Pettifogging their lives away" (264) and of "country bumpkins disporting themselves" (444). He observed the restless vitality of small-town teenagers and doubted that their sexual desires were really checked by religion and morality; yet, despite all their enthusiasm for life, he predicted that the narrowness of their environment would doom them: "Death, disease, the doldrums, small jobs, smaller ideas claim the majority of them. They grow up thinking that to be a drug clerk or a dentist or a shoe dealer is a great thing" (262). The poverty, physical infirmities and intellectual limitations of an Old Settlers' Day crowd in Columbia City led him to doubt the efficacy of our democratic system. "But how . . . is a proletariat such as this, and poorer specimens yet, as we all know, to hold its own against the keen, resourceful oligarths at the top?" (279). Struck by the uniform dullness of so many rural communities, Dreiser asserted that Indiana's greatest contribution to American life had been "a mildly soporific live literature of sorts, and an uncertain political vote" (336). Indianapolis struck him as one of the "tenth-rate imitations" of New York or Chicago (385); Indiana University professors he remembered as "heavy-domed, owl-like wiseacres" (484); and the "typical Hoosier" he described as a "shrewd type, a cross between a country politician and a sales agent" (283). Ultimately, his trip to Indiana left him equivocal: "I am not wildly intoxicated by the spirit of my native state, not utterly so at any rate; yet, I must admit that there is something curiously different about it--delicate, poetic, generative--I hardly know what to say" (428).

Ironically, it was Dreiser's reluctance to pay his home state unreserved tribute that brought him to the attention of Indiana cultural historians. Journalist Jacob Piatt Dunn gave him brief mention in *Indiana and Indianans* (1919), though only for the purpose of demonstrating that the author of *A Hoosier Holiday* was a maverick. "Optimism is a common characteristic of Indiana writers," insisted Dunn. "The one notable exception to this rule is Theodore Dreiser" (II, 1185). In particular, Dunn was offended by Dreiser's full disclosures of his own sexual activities and the family's poverty, despair and moral indiscretions during the Indiana years. Dreiser, Dunn noted, was "afflicted" with the idea "that it is fine to bare your soul to the world, unconscious of the fact that the average soul is more presentable in a fig-leaf--much more so in pajamas" (II, 1188-89). Ultimately, Dunn dismissed Dreiser

with a bit of exaggerated sarcasm aimed at the latter's cosmopolitan tone: "In all Indiana, he could find nothing admirable. To read his book, one would suppose that all decent and intelligent people in Indiana had removed to New York, and gone to writing for the *Smart Set*, and other esthetic publications" (II, 1189).

During the 1920's, the caretakers of the Indiana tradition returned to the strategy of ignoring Dreiser. For example, Logan Esarey, Indiana University Professor of History, devoted an extensive chapter of his *History of Indiana* (1922) to literature but failed to list him among the "more important workers in the literary field" (336). In fact, it was Esarey's contention that "all literary men of Indiana" came from "good stock and enjoyed a first-class education" (333). Certainly this description excluded Dreiser.

In 1924, Irwin S. Cobb published a humorous state" guyed book," *Indiana: Intellectually She Rolls Her Own*, illustrated by Hoosier author John T. McCutcheon. Cobb's nominations for outstanding literary achievements went to Riley, Tarkington, George Ade, Kin Hubbard and not surprisingly John T. McCutcheon. There was also an honorable-mention list, on which Dreiser's name did not appear. One of McCutcheon's illustrations was a literary map of Indiana, identifying the homes and birthplaces of outstanding Hoosiers. Terre Haute was recognized as the home of Dreiser's brother, Paul Dresser: "Author of 'On the Banks of the Wabash' lived here" (25).

Five years later, satirist Kin Hubbard in *A Book of Indiana* presented his own list of the state's leading writers. The familiar names appeared, and again Dreiser, who by this time had published *An American Tragedy*, was ignored. As a summation, Hubbard observed: "As one surveys this list of representative men and women of letters in Indiana, they seem to fall into two groups: those whose ability as story tellers found scope in tales of romantic days gone by; and those who saw beauty in everyday life, and charmingly recorded it" (371). Rather obviously, Dreiser belonged to neither group.

By the early 1930's, the "Golden Age" had come to an end. Of the hallowed circle, Maurice Thompson, Lew Wallace, Charles Major, James Whitcomb Riley, Gene Stratton Porter and George Barr McCutcheon were dead; George Ade, Booth Tarkington and Meredith Nicholson were clearly in the twilight of their careers. With their passing came a decreased emphasis by the caretakers on the achievements of Hoosier writers of the "Golden Age" and an increased willingness to claim authors previously shunned or ignored. During this period of

transition, Dreiser moved into the ranks of those receiving uncontested honorable mention. In 1931, for example, Terre Haute historian Charles Roll in his five-volume *Indiana* followed lengthy discussions of Riley, Porter, Nicholson and Tarkington with the names of "other Indianans who have distinguished themselves in various fields of writing" (II, 503). Toward the end of this lengthy and not always distinguished list was Theodore Dreiser. Likewise, the *Indiana Review* (1938), a state-sponsored survey of accomplishments, gave top billing in the "Hoosier Culture" section to the "Golden Age" writers but included Dreiser among "other Indiana writers who must be mentioned" (282).

The only notable snub during the 1930's came in 1934, when Indiana educators, with the advice and consent of leading politicians, drew up a list of the fourteen outstanding Hoosier authors. This list, which was ceremoniously announced by State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Floyd I. McMurray, contained the predictable names as well as historians Albert J. Beveridge and Claude Bowers and Congressman Louis Ludlow, who could claim among his four books a novel titled *Senator Soloman Spiffledink*. Dreiser was overlooked. The *Evansville Press*, remembering that as a child Dreiser had lived for a year in the "Pocket City," was outraged by the omission of "Evansville's leading candidate for literary honors" and demanded an explanation from Governor Paul V. McNutt. McNutt expressed surprise but went on to say that he had once met Dreiser and found him indifferent to a project involving Indiana University, where Dreiser attended for one year. Under the headline "Theodore Dreiser Is Indiana's Forgotten Man," the *Press* asked how a writer who had been runner-up for a Nobel Prize for literature in 1930 could be ignored. The newspaper then quoted extensively from *A Hoosier Holiday* in an attempt to demonstrate Dreiser's affection for Indiana, at least for Evansville, Terre Haute and Warsaw. Bloomington, McNutt's home town, he had described as "weak stuff." The *Press* suggested, therefore, that the omission of Dreiser's name from the roll of Indiana's favorite literary sons and daughters was McNutt's retaliation (3). Upon hearing of this skirmish in his home state, Dreiser had his secretary acquire twenty-five copies of the *Press* and send them to friends.

By the end of the 1930's, a reassessment of Dreiser's importance to Indiana literature was well underway. In the van of this movement was Richard A. Cordell, Professor of English at Purdue University, who in 1938 was "unpatriotic" enough to suggest that most of the literature produced during the "Golden Age" was ephemeral because "no great realist has risen in the state to utilize the native material." Dreiser

could have filled this void, continued Cordell, had he remained a Hoosier and written about the local scene. As it was, he left the state to tower above all its expatriots and become "undoubtedly the greatest writer to come out of Indiana" (4). In 1940, William E. Wilson, Professor of English at Indiana University and lifelong Dreiser supporter, published *The Wabash*, in which he admitted that in many ways Dreiser was "an exception to the common spirit of Hoosier writers"; however, Wilson refused to concede that Dreiser should be dismissed as an Indiana author. "Whenever he recalls his native Hoosier background or revisits it," wrote Wilson, "he grows as nostalgic and sentimental as all the others. In his autobiography [*Dawn*] and some of his travel books, there are pages of pure lyricism that James Whitcomb Riley might have written. He recaptures his boy's enthusiasm for roaming the fields and woods about Sullivan. He has a strong Hoosier affection for creeks and rivers." In the end, predicted Wilson,"Dreiser's name will survive the names of most Hoosiers in the history of literature" (313-14).

Following Wilson's lead was journalist Heath Bowman, who devoted a chapter of his *Hoosier: A Composite Portrait* (1941) to Dreiser, "Wrong Side of the Tracks." It was Bowman's contention that the Indiana years produced in Dreiser a hatred of poverty, injustice and self-righteousness that vitalized his work thereafter. For this reason, Indiana's past rejection of Dreiser was little less than hypocrisy. "You cannot disclaim what is not part of your pride or what you do not believe in," Bowman admonished his Indiana readers. "You had a hand in making Eugene Debs and Theodore Dreiser" (333). Also in 1941, the Indiana Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration produced *Indiana: A Guide to the Hoosier State*, which was exceedingly pro-Dreiser. In it, Dreiser's description of his Indiana boyhood in *A Hoosier Holiday* was called "one of the most delightful portraits of the Middle West in all literature." Tarkington and Dreiser were selected as the "best known" of Indiana's contemporary novelists, but Dreiser was deemed the greater artist because of his more "complex canvases." "With *An American Tragedy*," the appraisal concluded, "he emerged as the most important realistic fiction writer in the United States. He was the first novelist to mirror the changes that industrialism had wrought in America. . . He paved the way for Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck and other American realists" (148-50).

In 1947, John B. Martin's *Indiana: An Interpretation* drew extensively from *Dawn* to demonstrate that Dreiser's pictures of poverty and moral compromise were just as true to Indiana as the more idealistic portraits that most Hoosier

readers tended to prefer. To embrace the writings of Riley and Tarkington while rejecting Dreiser's warned Martin, is to deny the richness, diversity and complexity of the state (8).

During this decade of reassessment, the only major dissenting voice was that of R.E. Banta, whose *Indiana Authors and Their Books: 1816-1916* was published in 1949. Drawing upon Jacob Piatt Dunn's *Indiana and Indianans* for his primary information, Banta presented Dreiser as an author whose "startlingly frank treatment of delicate subject matter" had gained him "a recognition of sorts." However, looking forward to the day when the writers of the "Golden Age" would step forward to reclaim their lost glory, Banta rejected the belief that Dreiser's literary reputation was secure: "A half century or so--during which the sensationalism which marked his best-known novels will have had time to mellow--should give some clear decision as to Theodore Dreiser's contribution to Twentieth Century literature. During his life he was, to transplanted Hoosier critic George Jean Nathan, the most important American author; to many a reader of sound but less exotic taste he was only a gloomy and dirty-minded man whose prose was tortuous" (90-91).

As it turned out, however, Dreiser still had his moment of glory in connection with Banta's book, for at a well-attended party celebrating its publication, *Indianapolis Star* literary editor Corbin Patrick was asked to offer a toast. Disregarding Banta's obvious contempt for Dreiser's work, Patrick suggested that the audience drink to "the black sheep among Indiana's authors, the prodigal son who never came home, the greatest American novelist . . . a brooding, clumsy, earthbound giant, of little talent but much genius" ("Dinner and Toasts Commemorating the Publication of *Indiana Authors and Their Books*," 272-73). This toast was widely published around the state and has become locally one of the best-known assessments of Dreiser. By 1951, when Banta issued his enormously popular anthology of Indiana literature, *Hoosier Caravan: A Treasury of Indiana Life and Lore*, he had recanted sufficiently to include Patrick's toast and four chapters of *Dawn* in a unit titled "Came the Golden Age." The other writers acknowledged in this unit were James Whitcomb Riley and Booth Tarkington.

The battle had seemingly been won, for during most of the 1950's there were no significant challenges to Dreiser's relevance or importance to Indiana literature. Then, in 1959, a high school textbook of Indiana history, *Indiana: The Hoosier State*, was produced by a group of university and secondary school faculty. Units on Wallace, Eggleston, Riley and George Barr McCutcheon were included, along with the names

of many who had contributed to Indiana's cultural development. Paul Dresser's achievements were acknowledged, but not Dreiser's (282-93). Three years later, Arthur Shumaker, Professor of English at DePauw University, published his *History of Indiana Literature*, to date the most comprehensive and important work done on the subject. Dreiser, however, was "reluctantly" excluded. Despite Dreiser's formative years in Indiana and his extensive use of those experiences in *Jennie Gerhardt*, *A Hoosier Holiday*, *Dawn* and other works, Shumaker insisted that "insufficient residence and Indiana influence" in his writing placed him outside the boundaries of Hoosier literature (18).

Either by coincidence or design, a spate of books by Dreiser's Hoosier supporters followed hard upon the publication of Shumaker's history. In 1962, Claude Bowers devoted a chaper of his memoirs to Dreiser, calling him "one of the most heroic and significant figures in our literary history" (153). Two years later, Irving Leibowitz, managing editor and longtime columnist for the *Indianapolis Times*, published *My Indiana*, in which he lamented the passing of the "Golden Age" but praised *A Hoosier Holiday* for its graphic portrayals and conceded that the present belonged to Dreiser and the more realistic tradition that he pioneered (255). In 1966, Dale Burgess, journalist, came out with *Just Us Hoosiers*, "a popular history of Indiana." It is interesting to note that in its "Indiana Primer," which serves as a prologue, "P is for Porter," "R is for Riley," "W is for Wallace," but "D is for dogwood"; nevertheless, in the text, Burgess rejected Shumaker's exclusion of Dreiser and restored him to the honor roll of Indiana authors (87). That same year, William E. Wilson again came to Dreiser's defense in *Indiana: A History*. As evidence of the state's tendency to embrace the romantic and thus stake its literary claims on the ephemeral while ignoring true greatness, Wilson contrasted the careers of Tarkington and Dreiser. "Today Tarkington is all but ignored by serious critics of American literature," he concluded, "while Dreiser is recognized as a powerful force in the twentieth-century novel even by those who find him prolix, unliterary and somewhat absurd. Except in Indiana!" "Let Indianans be proud of what they are," Wilson lectured his audience, "but never self-righteous about what they think they are not" (224-28).

Though dramatic, Wilson's ringing "Except in Indiana!" was clearly exaggerated by 1966, as indicated by Corbin Patrick's assessment of the current state of the arts in Indiana, published that same year in *Indiana: A Self Appraisal*. Concerning literature, Patrick noted a significant shift in emphasis and attitude among the caretakers of the

Hoosier tradition. "There is a growing tendency among intellectuals," he wrote, "to dismiss the more celebrated Indiana novelists of the old school as popular entertainers and to give more credit to comparatively neglected masters from Edward Eggleston to Theodore Dreiser, William Vaughn Moody, David Graham Phillips, and others, who made direct contributions to what has become the mainstream of American literature" (241). In the future, Patrick asserted, a balance must be struck to restore some of the faded glory to the "Golden Age" writers who were once a source of great Hoosier pride. It is indeed ironic that Corbin Patrick, the critic who in 1949 stood up to gain Dreiser his rightful place among Indiana writers, should twenty-seven years later be pleading the case of former greats being dwarfed by Dreiser's reputation.

As the above survey demonstrates, Dreiser is no longer Indiana's forgotten author. He has long had his ardent supporters within the state, and over the last forty years, detractors have become the exception rather than the rule. Even those who still warm to the memories of Riley and Tarkington must admit, if somewhat grudgingly, that Dreiser's literary accomplishments are greater and destined to be more lasting than those of most Hoosier authors. And the events of the past fifteen years suggest that his reputation is indeed secure. During these years, the Lilly Library at Indiana University has demonstrated its faith in Dreiser's scholarly importance by assembling a manuscript collection second only to that at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Cunningham Library at Indiana State University (Terre Haute) has a Dreiser holding of well over two hundred items. In 1971, Indiana State University also hosted a three-day Dreiser Centennial, during which many of the activities were held in the English classroom building, Dreiser Hall. And in 1974, the Indiana Council of Teachers of English produced a widely distributed "Literary Map of Indiana," on which the Terre Haute area is covered by the picture of an overturned boat and the words "Theodore Dreiser: *An American Tragedy*."

Indiana historians have also continued to pay tribute to Dreiser's accomplishments. In 1968, DePauw historian Clifton J. Phillips in his *Indiana in Transition: 1880-1920* included Dreiser among "Indiana Writers of the Golden Age," praised the "searing quality" of his naturalism and called him one of the state's "greatest sons" (513). In *Indiana: A History* (1978), Howard H. Peckman, former director of the Indiana Historical Bureau and secretary of the Indiana Historical Society, conceded, albeit wistfully, that "Dreiser commands greater respect than Tarkington as a major novelist" (166-67). *The Hoosier State* (1980), a staple reading text for most courses

in Indiana history, has a large cutting from *Dawn*. And the most recently published history of Indiana, James Madison's *Indiana Through Tradition and Change: 1920-1945*, refers to Dreiser as "the most creative and thoughtful of Indiana authors, the one whose literary reputation is most enduring" (358). If anything, Dreiser is well on his way to becoming Indiana's most widely recognized and celebrated author.

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[1]In 1947, Purdue University librarian John H. Moriarity conducted a study to assess Indiana's production of popular literature. Using the *Publishers Weekly* sales statistics between 1900 and 1940, he awarded ten points to each year's best seller, nine points to the second best, and so on through the top ten. His study revealed that for the forty years surveyed, Indiana-born authors ranked second in the nation in the production of best-selling novels, scoring 213 points to New York's 218. Pennsylvania ranked third with a distant 125 points. See Shumaker (6-7).

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DREISER'S INTRODUCTION TO FREUDIANISM

Frederic E. Rusch
Indiana State University

"I shall never forget my first encounter with his *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, his *Totem and Tabu*, and his *Interpretation of Dreams*," wrote Theodore Dreiser in some remarks he sent to be read at a dinner honoring Sigmund Freud on his 75th birthday. He continued,

> At that time and even now quite every paragraph came as a revelation to me--a stong, revealing light thrown on some of the darkest problems that haunted and troubled me and my work. And reading him has helped me in my studies of life and men.[1]

That Dreiser was not exaggerating on the impact of Freud's writings on his work has been demonstrated by Ellen Moers and Donald Pizer. In *Two Dreisers*, Moers devoted an entire chapter to the influence of Freudianism on Dreiser's thought, and in *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser*, Pizer has shown how the author's interest in mechanistic and Freudian ideas led him to use "straightjacket formulistic characterizations" in the first draft of *An American Tragedy*.[2]

According to Dreiser, his friend Edith De Long introduced him to Freud's work. In a sketch of Edith's life, which Dreiser published in *A Gallery of Women* under the title of "Olive Brand," the novelist stated:

> she had, always, some little special news to trade with one. . . . Now it was to listen to some music, which she could interpret either vocally or instrumentally very well indeed. Or, she had a new and rare book with which I was by no means familiar. It was so that I came to know of Frazier and "The Golden Bough." Also, the "Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex," by Freud.[3]

Since, as Moers points out, Dreiser knew Edith "from about 1917," this statement would appear to supply an approximate date for Dreiser's introduction to Freud's writings.[4]

Neither Pizer nor Moers places much emphasis on it, however. Pizer acknowledges Dreiser's account of his introduction in a footnote, but concludes "Freudianism was ±in the air' during 1914-19, and Dreiser required no specific mentor."[5] Moers, too, relegates Dreiser's account to a note, in part, it seems, because she believed Dreiser was familiar

with Freud's thought, if not his works, before he met Edith. As evidence of Dreiser's knowledge, she quotes a passage with a reference to Freud that appears in the published text of Dreiser's *The Hand of the Potter*, a four-act play about a young man who sexually molests and then murders an eleven-year-old girl. The reference to Freud comes late in the play, in a scene that includes a debate among three newspaper reporters over whether the young man, Isadore Berchansky, is deserving of some sympathy. Quinn, the reporter who presents the case for Isadore in the debate, concludes a lengthy speech with the words,

> Now ye were a sayin' a while ago that ye can't understand why a man like that should be attackin' a little girl, unless he were a low, vile creature, even if he wasn't balanced quite right--but I can. If ye'd ever made a study ave the passion ave love in the sense that Freud an' some others have ye'd understand it well enough. It's a great force about which we know naathing as yet an' which we're just beginnin' to look into--what it manes, how it effects people.[6]

Since Dreiser wrote *The Hand of the Potter* in 1916, before he met Edith, Moers characterizes this reference to Freud as a "modish allusion" and attributes it to the interest in Freud's work among Dreiser's acquaintances in Greenwich Village at the time he wrote the play.[7] But what Moers failed to consider was that the published version of the play, printed in 1918 and issued to the public in 1919, may have been different from the text Dreiser wrote in 1916. And, in fact, it was. Freud's name does not appear in the 1916 version of *The Hand of the Potter*. The textual history of the play reveals that he added the reference in May of 1918, and there is also evidence that Edith De Long was responsible for the addition.

The 1916 version of *The Hand of the Potter* is a holograph manuscript that Dreiser completed in late November or early December. The manuscript is extant, and an examination of it shows that, at this point in the genesis of the play, Dreiser had not yet written the debate among the three reporters in which Freud's name is cited.[8] Instead, he introduces a fourth reporter, who is welcomed by the other three and brought up-to-date on what has been discovered in an apartment where Isadore has committed suicide. Dreiser had Estelle Kubitz make a type-script of the manuscript, and throughout 1917 he circulated copies of the typescript among friends, producers and publishers. These copies have not been located, but apparently Dreiser decided to drop the scene with the fourth reporter and add the debate instead sometime before or shortly after Boni and Liveright agreed to publish the play in January

of 1918. The copy he sent to Boni and Liveright is lost, also, but the next extant version of the play, a set of page proofs Dreiser received from the printers on April 17, 1918, includes the debate.[9] Interestingly, however, the debate as then written does not include a reference to Freud. In the page proofs, Quinn finishes his argument with the words,

> Now ye were sayin' a while ago that ye can't understand why a man like that should be attackin' a little girl, unless he were a low, vile creature, even if he wasn't balanced quite right--but I can. If ye'd ever been in love with a woman--really in love, I mean--ye'd know somethin' more about that. The sex-instinct is the most powerful thing in nature. It drives people mad at times. It's caused wars. Maybe ye think that poor Jelly was like yourself--a hit with aal women--but--[10]

Dreiser corrected and revised these page proofs in May and returned them to Boni and Liveright on or before June 3rd.[11] Since the extant set is not the set he sent to his publisher, it does not contain the changes he made at this time. But a final prepublication version, a set of revised page proofs he received in the summer, does include them. And in this version the reference to studies made by Freud and others is substituted for Quinn's comment on the "power of the sex-instinct."[12] In fact, the entire text of the revised proofs reads exactly as the text of the published version quoted by Moers.

While the textual history of *The Hand of the Potter* documents that Dreiser first used Freud's name almost two years later than Moers believed he did, some correspondence between Dreiser and another friend, Edward H. Smith, gives a clue to the source of the reference. On April 22, 1918, Dreiser sent a set of the page proofs of his play to Smith.[13] Smith acknowledged receipt of the proofs in a letter to Dreiser dated May 2nd, and, in this letter, he asked if Edith De Long could read them.[14] Dreiser's reply is lost, but there is no reason to believe he refused. His Greenwich Village diary indicates that he had begun his friendship with Edith by May of 1917,[15] and his sketch of her in a *Gallery of Women* shows he respected her judgment. Thus it is highly likely that Edith read these proofs, and this likelihood is significant, for it calls attention to Dreiser's account of his introduction to Freud. As noted earlier, Dreiser wrote that Edith was responsible for making him aware of Freud's *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*. While his account does not indicate when she did this, the subject matter of *The Hand of the Potter* would certainly have given her an opportunity to mention Freud's book. After she read the proofs, she must

have suggested to Dreiser that he examine Freud's work and this, in turn, probably prompted Dreiser to add a reference to Freud in his play. Even if Dreiser did not read Freud's *Three Contributions* immediately, Edith's comments would have been sufficient to show Dreiser how Freud's study cast "a revealing light" on the "darkest problems that haunted and troubled" his study of a sex-criminal.

In conclusion, the reference to Freud in *The Hand of the Potter* is more than a "modish allusion" occasioned by Village Freudianism. The textual history of the play reveals when Dreiser must have been introduced to Freud's thought, and Edward H. Smith's letter provides strong circumstantial evidence in support of Dreiser's account of this introduction. Dreiser's introduction to Freudianism occurred in May of 1918, and Edith De Long, it would appear, was indeed his mentor.

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[1]Theodore Dreiser, "Remarks," in *Theodore Dreiser: A Selection of Uncollected Prose*, ed. Donald Pizer (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1977), p. 263.

[2]Ellen Moers, *Two Dreisers* (New York: Viking, 1969), pp. 256-70; Donald Pizer, *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1976), pp. 211-14.

[3]Theodore Dreiser, "Olive Brand," in *A Gallery of Women* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1929), I, 81-82.

[4]Moers, p. 262.

[5]Pizer, p. 365, n. 21.

[6]Theodore Dreiser, *The Hand of the Potter* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 200.

[7]Moers, p. 262.

[8]Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

[9]Albert Boni to Dreiser, 16 April 1918, Dreiser Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library (hereafter designated U.P.).

[10]First page proofs, p. 198, U.P. Permission to quote this passage was kindly granted by the University of Pennsylvania.

[11]Horace Liveright to Dreiser, 3 June 1918, U.P.

[12]Revised page proofs, p. 200, U.P.

[13]Dreiser to Smith, 23 April 1918, U.P.

[14]Smith to Dreiser, 2 May 1918, U.P.

[15]Theodore Dreiser, *The American Diaries 1902-1926*, eds. Thomas P. Riggio, James L. W. West III, and Neda M. Westlake (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p. 158.

NORRIS'S ATTITUDE

TOWARD *SISTER CARRIE*

Joseph R. McElrath, Jr.
Florida State University

One of the more interesting recent developments in "l'affaire Doubleday" is that Frank Norris has been considered a third villain--Jack Salzman having suggested that Norris trimmed his sails before Doubleday and Page and took a new tack on 18 July 1900.[1] This accusation triggered a defensive response on the part of Robert Morace, who argued that Norris did not necessarily "betray" Dreiser.[2] The latest voice to be heard is that of Jesse S. Crisler, who, in *Frank Norris: Collected Letters*, does not see Norris as having opted for personal expediency in the new situation suddenly resulting from Doubleday's return from Europe; rather, Norris appears to him as the only one on the Doubleday side who maintained his integrity during the proceedings.[3] In fact, however, we simply do not know how much Norris's attitude toward *Carrie* changed--if it did change--when he discovered that his superiors had taken a new view of his "find." The correspondence is such that the fact of the matter remains moot; speculation is still the only means by which to develop a sense, or senses, of what occurred when Norris found that things had changed.

A newly recovered item concerning *Carrie* published in the San Francisco weekly, *The Wave*, does not wholly illuminate the situation. Vis a vis Norris and the typescript in jeopardy by mid-July, the paragraph on Dreiser and Arthur Henry appearing in the regular "Things and People" feature of the 28 July 1900 issue (p. 6) does not reflect all of the developments at the Doubleday offices. But for those inclined toward serious consideration of inferable "facts," the paragraph-length blurb offered by John O'Hara Cosgrave (signing himself "Boswell Jr.") may be of special interest.

A survey of *The Wave* from January, 1894, through July, 1900, reveals that Dreiser's and Henry's names were hardly household words in San Francisco. Despite *The Wave*'s very regular and detailed coverage of the monthly offerings of the magazines and noteworthy developments in some newspapers,

neither man had been previously mentioned. In July, 1900, there was no reason for anyone to know of the two nobodies focused upon by Cosgrave--except that Frank Norris, editor Cosgrave's former employee, had stayed in touch with his mentor of 1895-1898, feeding him copy. After February, 1898, when Norris left *The Wave* for employment by S. S. McClure and then Doubleday, he had kept Cosgrave posted on his experiences--this resulting in an as-yet-unrecorded series of Norris blurbs derived from letters and conversations had when Norris twice returned to the bay area. The pattern manifested itself again on 28 July when Cosgrave made copy of the latest word on doings in New York City. Cosgrave's principal point was that a new school of fiction appeared to be assuming definition, offering relief from the historical romances and novels then very much in vogue. Under the heading of "New Writings," he began by lamenting this sign of regression from the kind of realistic art that Norris and he had long championed. "Will there soon be reaction from the present craze for historical fiction?" As he did at least once before, he keyed his answer to "insider" information regarding the New York publishers made available by Norris: "That is a question of deep interest among the publishers." Then making a distinction that Norris and he both focused upon in *The Wave*, he wrote that accuracy--in the sense of fidelity to the true--was lacking in historical fantasies. "Accuracy is not especially in demand--indeed it is surely a lack of originality [in that kind of fiction] to fail in supplying new setting for eminent personalities."

The business of taking a Napoleon or a Cromwell and fashioning a new set of experiences for them was an irritant for Cosgrave. Thus it was good news that Norris had forwarded from the front:

> I have heard recently that much is expected of the debut of two chicago men, whose novels emerge this Spring under the auspices of the new Doubleday-Page firm. They are Theodore Dreiser and Arthur Henry--both young, on the right side of thirty, newspaper men by calling and great friends. Frank Norris read the manuscripts [sic] of *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser's book, for Doubleday-Page, and accepted it at once. He describes the style as grim, direct realism, tremendously strong.

With that last sentence embodying Norris's typical style for such declarations, the blurb concludes with an unusual linking of Dreiser and Henry as the same kind of writers--which will make sense only in light of Norris's extraordinarily broad definition of Naturalism as a synthesis of the Realistic and the Romantic. To Norris, that is, both

Zola's *La Debacle* and James Lane Allen's love idyll, *A Summer in Arcady*, were Naturalistic. Thus Cosgrave's conclusion: "*When Dreams Come True*, Henry's novel, is very fanciful and idyllic. There is a pronounced individuality in the work of both men and they may be leaders of a new school."

Norris could have written the letter on or shortly after 18 July. It was possible for an 18-21 July letter to reach and be processed by Cosgrave before the press deadline on Thursday, 26 July. The reference to a spring 1901 publication of Dreiser's and Henry's novels might possibly be interpreted as an indication that Norris saw a protracted delay in the ushering of *Carrie* through the press. This kind of extrapolation in one's reasoning, however, seems extreme; one would not want to hang newly washed clothing on such a line. It seems more appropriate to assume an earlier date of composition. For if Norris had mentioned Dreiser's difficulties, Cosgrave would have had reason to end the paragraph differently, to return to his first point regarding the historical-fiction vogue and to observe that it was likely to continue in light of Doubleday's reaction to "grim, direct realism." Given Norris's enthusiasm for *Carrie*, it is unthinkable that he would not have somehow expressed his disappointment to Cosgrave if he had known that Doubleday and Page wished to escape from the agreement.

Thus, we still do not know if Norris did a *volte face* when word came down from Doubleday a day or two later. It is still possible that Norris was intimidated--though that is dubious because of the Norris-Doubleday relationship. They were intimate to the degree that, five months earlier, Doubleday was an official witness at Norris's wedding and probably served the function of best man. (The only other witness at the private ceremony was Frank's mother.) One also wonders if Norris at all felt he had to think in terms of saving his hide, given that he was something of a pet of the firm. Doubleday had paid his way to California just to research *The Octopus* in the spring of the previous year. Further, in light of the healthy sales of *A Man's Woman*, which had appeared in January, 1900, there are no less than three indications that Norris's situation at Doubleday, Page & Co. was a secure one. Thus the question becomes, why *would* Norris suppress his enthusiasm for *Carrie*? Another is, could he have masked it, given the record of his impulsive personality? When he made his recommendation of *Carrie*, he was enthusiastic. The 28 July 1900 piece in *The Wave* reveals that his enthusiasm was so great that, of all things in New York City possible to write about, he chose to tell Cosgrave of an unknown named Dreiser. After the publication he was still enthusiastic, personally seeing to the distribution of review

copies and praising this "*true* book" in a letter to Dreiser. In the same 28 January 1901 letter he described the New York *Commercial Advertiser* review as "non-committal" when, as Jesse S. Crisler has observed, it was simply not positive *enough* to suit him.[4] Did he buckle under? Was he coldly calculating? If he was, it would be the first time on record for this enthusiast in all things whose hyperbole in *A Man's Woman* and *The Octopus* is a uniform index of both the writer and the man. It is most difficult to imagine him acting like the coolly expedient self-server he pictured in Charlie Geary of *Vandover*. It is, on the other hand, easy to visualize the writer of the letter that Cosgrave used to give Dreiser his first puff on the west coast. Until positive evidence of a perfidious Norris surfaces, it seems best to retain the image of him suggested by Cosgrave's piece and to note that, well before *Carrie* was published in November, Dreiser was already being praised as the leader of a new school--thanks to Norris.

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[1]"The Publication of *Sister Carrie*: Fact and Fiction," *Library Chronicle*, 33 (Spring 1967), 19-33.

[2]"Dreiser's Contract for *Sister Carrie*: More Fact and Fiction," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 9 (1982), 305-11.

[3](San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1986), p. 120, n. 4.

[4]*Frank Norris: Collected Letters*, p. 144. Crisler quotes the positive beginning of the review in n. 3.

DREISER NEWS & NOTES

In regard to "The Revisionist Views of Sarah Schanab Dreiser" by George H. Douglas (*DS*, Spring 1987), Vera Dreiser sends the following statement: "I am very comfortable with my assessment of Sarah and John Paul Dreiser. I do not feel the need to discuss, explain or defend it, as I am confident that it is correct. It is based on both my personal and professional knowledge. Everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion, however, and I respect that." . . . Professor T.D. Nostwich informs us that his edition of Dreiser's "Heard in the Corridors" articles and related writings is now scheduled for January 1988 publication by the Iowa State University Press. The Press describes the volume as follows: "One hundred seventy-five short newspaper columns by American writer and novelist Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) are collected here. They represent Dreiser's earliest known creative writing--which anticipates themes and topics of his later work--as well as intriguing insights into daily life and thought of 1890s midwestern America. Represented as real-life interviews, most of the articles in this book are, in fact, a collection of Dreiser's imaginative anecdotes, short essays, and observations." Nostwich also notes that his Pennsylvania Edition of Dreiser's newspaper stories is going into proof and is tentatively scheduled for late spring 1988 publication. . . . In July, Harold Dies sent us the following information on recently published or forthcoming editions of Dreiser books: "With respect to the news [*DS*, Spring 1987] item concerning the publication of *Sister Carrie*, *Jennie Gerhardt* and *Twelve Men*, by The Library of America, you might like to know that MBI Publishers (Easton Press) are coming out this fall with two hard cover editions of *An American Tragedy*, both a deluxe edition and a regular edition. Also, the publishing firm of Howard Fertig, Inc., here in New York City has just published a new hard cover edition of Dreiser's book of short stories, *Chains*, as well as *The Color of a Great City*." . . . Richard Lingeman gives us the following update on his work: "Volume II of the biography has grown very long, for reasons you can well imagine, and a large segment of it has gone to the editorial shops for cutting and tuning. Having completed the *American Tragedy* period, I tell myself optimistically that I am on the downhill slope, but there are

still some miles to go. Right now my job at the *Nation* keeps me a weekend writer, but I hope to take another leave and finish the job ere spring 1988 is upon us." . . . Donald Pizer, Frederic E. Rusch and Richard W. Dowell have signed a contract with G.K. Hall & Co. to compile *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide*. . . . We have received a copy of Kiyohiko Murayama's *Seodoa Doraisa Ron--Amerika to Higeki*, translated *A Study of Theodore Dreiser: America and the Tragedy*). The publishing company is Nan'undo. Professor Murayama was in Terre Haute some years ago to view the places associated with Dreiser's years in this city. We recall his great knowledge of and enthusiasm for Dreiser's work and congratulate him on his scholarly achievement.