THE DREISER NEWSLETTER

Volume Two: Number Two Fall, 1971

CENTENNIAL REPORT

The Centennial celebration was a great success, and the editors wish to thank all those who had a part in making it so. Publicity was statewide, national, and international. We were mentioned and discussed on the Today Show (NBC) on August 27, Dreiser's exact birthday; and p. 39 of *Newsweek* for August 23 also had a story about Dreiser, the Centennial and Marguerite Tjader, along with a picture of Theodore in 1938. Newspapers giving us attention included the Terre Haute *Tribune* and *Star*, the Indiana State University *Statesman*, the Indianapolis *Star*, the Indianapolis *News*, the South Bend *Tribune*, the Ann Arbor *News*, the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, the Washington *Post*, New York *Times*, Moscow *News*, and Tokyo *Yomiuri*. Coverage in and around Terre Haute was particularly good. At the time of writing, Mr. Simon Boorda has promised us coverage in the *Daily World*, and many other newspapers may have mentioned us without this being brought to our attention.

International publicity has come through Professor Yassen Zassoursky, Dean of the Faculty, School of Journalism, University of Moscow, who also joined our panel on Dreiser's Social Philosophy; Professor Shigeo Mizuguchi of Saint Paul's University, Tokyo; Mr. Rolf Lunden of the University of Uppsala in Sweden; and Professor Ernest Griffin of York University, Downsview, Ontario, Canada. All four of these distinguished guests brought us greetings at the dinner.

Members of the Dreiser family included, in addition to Dr. Vera Dreiser and her daughter Tedi, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dresser Gormley of Johnson City, New York (Mr. Gormley is Dreiser's sister Clare's son) and his daughter Ruth Gormley Pickard and her son David Pickard and two of Dreiser's distant relatives, with their wives, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Dreiser and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dreiser of Gary, Indiana. As we understand it, the novelist's father was the uncle of the father of the Dreiser brothers represented at the Centennial. Theodore and Paul Dreiser were born in Mayen, Germany, and have remained quite close to the Dreisers still living there.

Twenty-three students attended the Dreiser Workshop from August 9 through August 20. All of them were very much impressed that the "deliverers of the word" about Dreiser were quite human and approachable, after all. Workshop students heard speeches by Professor Griffin of Ontario; Professor James Kuhn of Northern Michigan University; Professor Larry Hussman of Wright State College, Dayton, Ohio; and Professors Eileen Bender and Janet Scalpone of Notre Dame University on the days preceding and following the main celebration on August 17 and 18.

Except for changes in room assignment, the main Centennial program was the same as that outlined in the brochures distributed to all subscribers to this *Newsletter*. All spontaneous parts of the program were taped and are currently being transcribed.

We have received a number of inquiries about the possibility of obtaining a copy of the Centennial's *Proceedings*. At present we are gathering manuscripts from those who delivered papers at the celebration. It is our hope to combine these with the transcribed spontaneous parts of the program, and to make the *Proceedings* available to libraries and Dreiserians insofar as possible. We are approaching several university presses with the idea; that failing, we will seek other local means of publication. More about this next issue.

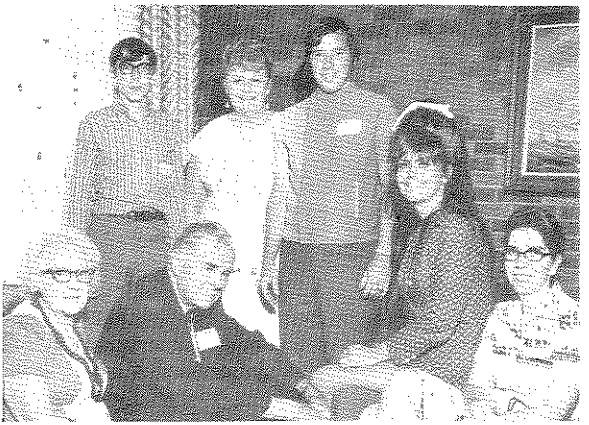
Two additional Dreiser celebrations are planned for November. At the U. of Pennsylvania on Nov. 18 two lectures are scheduled at the Van Pelt Library: "Dreiser's Fiction" The Editorial Problem," by Donald Pizer; and "Dreiser: Bibliography and the Biographer," by Robert Elias. An exhibition of MSS, books and correspondence from the Dreiser Collection will be on display. "This is the first exhibition that will allow us to show the Collection in depth," reports curator Neda Westlake.

A Dreiser program is also planned as part of the annual meeting of the Philological Association of the Pacific Coast on Nov. 27 at the U. of California (Riverside). The program includes: "Dreiser and the Hostile Critics," by Richard Lehan; "Dreiser's Conception of Human Value in *An American Tragedy*," by Carey Wall; "*Sister Carrie* and the Failure of Passion," by Clark Griffith; and "The Image of Women in Dreiser's Fiction, 1900-25," by Sybil Weir. Program chairman is John Clendenning, San Fernando Valley State College.

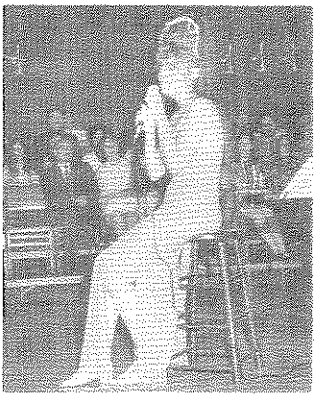
Thanks, again, to all of you.

--The Editors

A Gathering of Dreiserians



DREISER FAMILY AT THE CENTENNIAL. Back row, left to right: David Pickard, son of Ruth Gormley Pickard; Dr. Vera Dreiser, niece of Theodore Dreiser; Robert Barry Langdon, husband of Tedi Dreiser. Front row: Mrs. Paul Dresser Gormley; Paul Dresser Gormley, nephew of Theodore Dreiser; Tedi Dreiser Langdon; Ruth Gormley Pickard, daughter of Paul Dresser Gormley.



TEDI DREISER. Tedi, a grandniece of Theodore Dreiser, performed a medley of Paul Dresser songs at the Centennial, and two Dreiser poems set to music: "To a Wood Dove," and "Requiem."

SPEAKERS TABLE AT THE DREISER DINNER. Back row, left to right: Robert P. Saalbach, Centennial chairman; Mrs. Saalbach; Maurice Townsend, Vice President for Academic Affairs at ISU; Mrs. Townsend. Front row: Main speaker John J. McAleer, Boston College; Mrs. Madeline Wilson, Dreiser Workshop student; Richard Dowell, associate Centennial chairman; Vera Dreiser.

Dreiser on the European Continent

by

Dr. Renate Schmidt-von Bardelben

Editor's Note: On August 27, 1971, Mayen, Germany, celebrated the centennial of Dreiser's birth. The program consisted of a main lecture on Dreiser as a writer, concerts by the Municipal Orchestra preceding and following the lecture, a gathering of the Dreiser family, and an exhibition of books and other interesting pieces of Dreiseriana to be found in Mayen. The guest lecturer was Dr. Renate Schmidt-von Bardeleben of the University of Mainz. Her dissertation, published with Hueber, Munich, is titled *Das Bild New Yorks im Erzahlwerk von Dreiser und Dos Passos* (The Image of New York in the Works of Dreiser and Dos Passos). During 1969-70 she visited the U.S. on an ACLS Fellowship to do research for a book on American autobiography as a work of art.

"In preparing this article on Dreiser and the european continent," writes Dr. Schmidt-von Bardeleben, "I wish to thank three members of the Dreiser family living in Mayen, Germany: Miss Karola Dreiser, Mrs. Wilhelmine Hilger, and Mr. Theodore Dreiser--all of whom readily volunteered information concerning the family history and their relations with Theodore Dreiser. Concerning the history of Mayen, I am greatly indebted to Joseph Hilger's book, *Die Stadt Mayen im Wandel der Zeiten* (1926)."

Part One:

THEODORE DREISER, THE GERMAN DREISERS, AND GERMANY

Theodore Dreiser's heritage, cultural and biological, received its main imprint from its three-quarters of German blood, his father being a German emigrant, his mother, though American born, of partly Pennsylvania Dutch (mother: Esther Schaub), partly Moravian extraction (father: Henry Schänäb). The religious fanaticism of Dreiser's father, coupled with a severe moral code and his economic failure, seemed to signal his general ineptitude and did not appear to enhance German characteristics in a favor-

able way, nor particularly endear this country to the son. If not for this antagonism, Dreiser might have been tempted to call Germany his "fatherland" by one remove. Under the circumstances Dreiser always looked on Germans and German immigrants with an especially critical eye. From his novels and their German-American characters we can derive no especially favorable attitude. It can only be said that Dreiser had a better knowledge of them than of any other type of American immigrant.

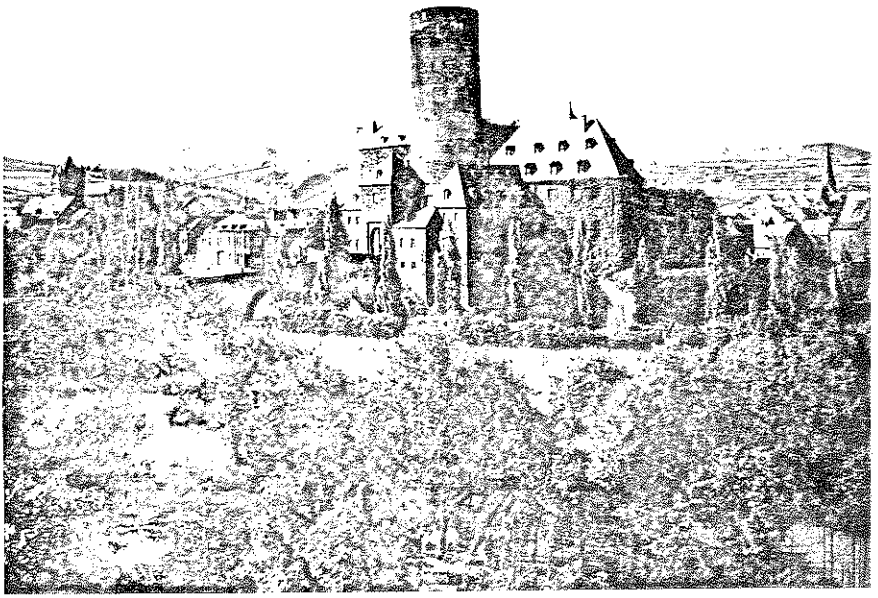
Therefore it should not come as a surprise that Dreiser, when visiting Europe, was in no hurry to see Germany and his father's birthplace. We have to wait until the very end of Dreiser's travel book—and this corresponds roughly with the outline of his European trip—to see him visit Germany. Moreover, compared to the space he allows for the description of the various countries, Germany ranks, if not last, at least behind England, France, and Italy. The published book, *A Traveler at Forty*, a cut-down version of the holograph, was shortened in proportion, and his narrative of his German adventures, though somewhat rearranged, was not decisively cut. (For a description of Mayen in *AT at F* see typescript in the Dreiser collection, U. of Penn., Box 13, pp. 866-883.) Some passages he left out he was later to make use of in *Dawn*. After the great number of cities and places he saw in other countries, the selection he made for Germany is disturbingly small. As he said, he wished only to see two places: Mayen, his father's home town, and Berlin.

In order to get to Mayen he had to stop at Frankfort, Mayence and Coblenz. The city of Mayen proved difficult to locate. Dreiser himself was obviously not too sure about the exact location, and must have accepted the mistake his Cook's tourist agent committed when he sold Dreiser a ticket for Mayence (Mainz) instead of Mayen, which he said did not exist. In a letter to his friend Grant Richards on Feb. 25, 1912, Dreiser states: "... I shall be ...(on) March 11th in Frankfort, Germany at the Grand Hotel Frankfurterhof. I am stopping there because my father was born at Mayence (sic!) only 25 miles away and I want to see for myself what sort of country he came from. On the 12th or 13th I shall be in Berlin." (Elias, *Letters*, I, p. 138.) Obviously, Dreiser did not plan more than a stopover on his way to Berlin. Mayen actually was farther away from Frankfort, about a hundred miles, and not too far from Coblenz. He was apparently under the pressure of time--which explains some of the mistakes and misunderstandings that ensued. He did not find any living Dreisers when, after a series of complications, he finally reached the city. In fact, he did not seem to have made any particular effort to find any. He writes: "For in spite of the fact that there was now no one there to whom I could count myself re-

lated, still it was from there that my ancestors had come" (*AT at F*, p. 453). In 1912 there were four families living there by the name of Dreiser and two additional women relations. One family was living exactly opposite the house where Dreiser said he stayed for the night. His German, apparently, was none too good, as he often confesses, once noting: "I speak abominable German, just sufficient to make myself understood by a really clever person" (*AT at F*, p. 400). He wrote no letters in German to his German relations, apologizing in an unpublished letter of July 8, 1926: "I speak a very little German and understand it not so much better but could make myself understood." Perhaps this poor knowledge of German explains why in *A Traveler at Forty* as well as in *Dawn* he tells a strange story about his uncle John (Johann) Dreiser.

Dreiser thinks he was told by people in Mayen that his uncle was in the furniture business and had left the city when he went bankrupt. This does not correspond in the least with the facts. There was no Dreiser at the time employed in the furniture business, nor had any one of them gone bankrupt. Johann Dreiser owned large stone yards, the main business of Mayen for centuries. Thinking his uncle "in disgrace" Dreiser "thought it as well not to identify myself with this Dreiser too closely" (*AT at F*, p. 451). This first reaction seems to have governed his further attempts to meet with living Dreisers. He was evidently afraid of discovering a set of poor relations. Speaking of his father in *Dawn*, Dreiser writes: "Later on in life I visited his birthplace—Mayen—and found that he sprang from no great or pretentious stock, at least not in recent days. True, among his relatives and connections were some fairly prosperous—one cousin owned stone and coal yards; another, a furniture dealer, had failed for 50,000 marks—but no individuality of great standing. Indeed, I am fairly well satisfied that there were none" (p. 9). In a somewhat ambiguous way Dreiser appears to have cherished the idea of being the only remarkable and successful Dreiser in a family of failures and unpretentious people.

If Dreiser had only troubled to investigate he might have learned that he did not come from quite such inconspicuous stock as he imagined. The Dreiser family up to these days has always been moderately prosperous and of an enterprising spirit. They belonged to the oldest families in Mayen--Mayen itself, as Dreiser found to his surprise, was a very delightful historic place, dating back to Roman and Celtic times, and boasting several prehistoric sites. From 1571 onwards, the names of six Dreisers serving as city mayors can be found intermittently in the files of the old archives. Others are mentioned in various trades--a school teacher in 1632, another two Dreisers guildmasters of the blacksmiths, and a stone mason in 1767. At the same



The ancient castle Genovevaburg built in 1280. Dreiser calls it "Schloß," the original name, and describes it in A Traveler at Forty.

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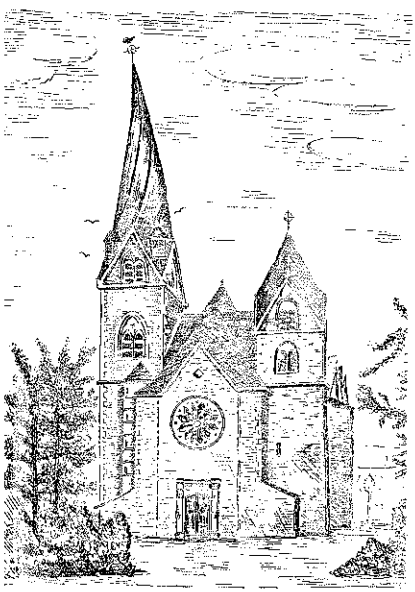
time the city register shows that they always owned landed property. Up to this century a street in Mayen even bore the name Dreiser-Street.

Dreiser's father was born in the big family house located across the street from the priest's house and the old parish church of St. Clemens. Up to this day the population of Mayen is almost exclusively Roman Catholic. In 1843, one year before Dreiser's father left Mayen, the population numbered 4,395. Out of that total number 4,291 belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Viewed against this background, the stern moral discipline and rigid belief of Dreiser's father should be no surprise.

Dreiser continues the above-quoted paragraph from *Dawn* by explaining the origin of his name as being French: "The word 'Dreiser'—so I have been told—means 'barber' in French, and

I have heard my father say that there were some Dreisers over the adjacent French border. I never troubled to investigate." It is a speculative matter as to who volunteered this French etymology, presumably not his father. The name is beyond doubt of German origin. The Dreiser family tradition traces the name to a nearby village, Dreis—a man coming from that place being called a Dreiser. This is a fairly common pattern in the formation of German surnames, and it is further sustained by the prevailing pattern of Mayen family names, which mostly refer to surrounding villages, as did the maiden name of Theodore Dreiser's great grandmother, Margarete Retterath. From the above information, it can be concluded that Dreiser comes from an old family which had lived for centuries, and probably longer, in and around Mayen, his father's home town.

As to the "Dreisers over the adjacent French border," one need not go very far to trace them as brothers and sisters of his father. Dreiser's grandfather Johann Dreiser had married three times and reared a family of twenty-two children, who felt that their fortunes were elsewhere than in the small city of Mayen. One of the sons emigrated to London, while another went to Paris together with two of his sisters. These were the "French" relations Dreiser's father was talking about. From around 1795 to 1815 Mayen had belonged to France and had only recently come under Prussian government. Thus Dreiser's father, Johann Paul Dreiser, was subject to Prussian conscription in 1844,



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The Dreiser family home stood in the shadow of the St. Clemens Catholic Church drawn to the left. Though dating back to the 12th century the building is predominantly Gothic in style. The grotesquely twisted steeple, the result of a 14th—century structural flaw, has become the traditional symbol of the city of Mayen. (Even after destruction in World War II the steeple was carefully restored to duplicate its unique original.)

and on his escape chose to follow his brother and sisters into France. It was probably more than conscription which bred the resolve of Paul Dreiser to leave Germany for a more promising country. Life at home with a severe stepmother was not particularly enticing, and his chosen trade as a weaver held no promise for his future at home. The mills about that time were closing down.

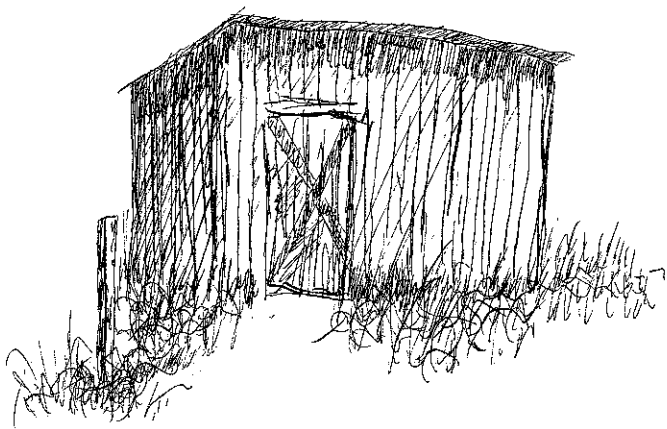
After reaching the United States Paul Dreiser sent regular reports home, until suddenly the exchange of letters stopped. This abrupt silence can be tentatively connected with the burning of his mill in Sullivan and the subsequent financial misfortune. Despite the lack of contact with the old Dreiser family, Paul Dreiser raised his children in true obedience to the stern principles of his father's home, which, in another environment that did not generally sanction his belief, quickly led to the rebellion of his children. How strongly he adhered to the family tradition can be demonstrated by the first names he chose for his thirteen children, selecting names that showed no trace of adaptation to his new country and home, America, but rather names which were long established in the Dreiser family, names that his ancestors had borne in successive generations, names his twenty-two brothers and sisters had been given. He christened the sons Johann Paul, Markus Romanus, Alphons Joachim, Theodor Hermann Albert, Eduard Minerod; the daughters Maria Franziska, Emma Wilhelmina, Theresa, Cäcilia, Clara. In the holograph version of *Dawn* (Dreiser collection, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Ind.) Dreiser set down these names with the exact German spelling, but in the published version changed the names of his sisters. The children, hating to be branded in this way as non-American ["Alphonse Joachim (Lord, how he did hate that second name!)", *Dawn*, p. 10], quickly changed their names to suit some common American abbreviation, often regardless of the fact that the short name was in no way related to their real name--for example, Sylvia for the old-fashioned Cäcilia. In a similar way Dreiser, in *Jennie Gerhardt* (p. 119), has the old Gerhardt choose the name Wilhelmina for his granddaughter. Theodor(e) was a very common first name among the Dreisers, his father's brother bearing that name, the brother who died suddenly by accident and whose tombstone Dreiser was to discover--with a shock on account of the inscription--in the Mayen cemetery. Even today in Mayen there is one Theodor Dreiser living, now in his eighties. In sum, these names of long standing provide another instance of how Dreiser, along with his brothers and sisters, reacted to a German background.

The Mayen Dreisers, whom he had not met in 1912, only heard again of the American branch of the family when Theodore Dreiser's fame spread to Germany after publication of *An American Tragedy* in 1925. Due to their initiative he considered a second visit to his

father's birthplace. Staying in Trondjhem on July 8, 1926, he announced his plans to his German relatives, but although some Dreiser critics believe that he went to Mayen in 1926, this is not the case. On August 12, 1926, staying in Berlin with one of the German Dreiser cousins who was married to a prosperous jeweler, he wrote again to his Mayen family. Of the letters he exchanged with his Mayen cousins, only two survive--still in the possession of the Mayen Dreisers. Others were lost during the Second World War.

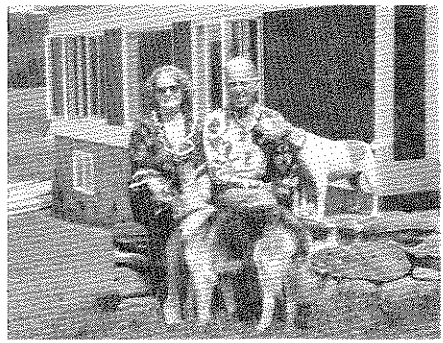
In 1927 Dreiser paid another short visit to Berlin on his way to Russia. In 1938 he saw Europe for the last time, but did not go to Germany because of the unpleasant political development. Despite his image in the German newspapers, Dreiser did not feel himself to be of typical German temperament. To judge from facts and from his writings, Germany for him was more an emotional experience, a set of values and grievances attached to the figure of his father. He rightly considered himself an American and generally held the same opinions on Germany and typical German characteristics as the average American. Compared with Mencken, who was steeped in German literature and philosophy, Dreiser rather turned to French and English writers and philosophers. His image of Germany was formed and translated to his writings before he reached Germany: it was conditioned by his native Indiana environment. It is the German in America, the immigrant, that is an important figure in his work, not the German in Germany.

[Part II of Dr. Schmidt-von Bardeleben's article—entitled "The Reception of Dreiser in Western Europe"—will appear in the Spring 1972 issue of DN.*]*



Airmail Interview:

MARGUERITE TJADER



Marguerite Tjader at her brother Richard's farm, Summer 1971.

MARGUERITE TJADER was born and brought up on her parents' estate in Darien, Connecticut. She became acquainted with Dreiser many years ago, at which time she worked as his secretary, and has never ceased to be impressed with Dreiser the man, finding in his personality something rich, warm, and intangible. Her first book on Dreiser, *Theodore Dreiser: A New Dimension*, appeared in the 1960's and is especially notable for the story it tells of Dreiser's working methods in *The Bulwark*, a book with which Marguerite Tjader was closely associated as she worked with the author in Hollywood during the months that saw the work to its completion.

Along with John J. McAleer, Professor of English at Boston College, Marguerite Tjader is the co-editor of Dreiser's *Notes on Life*, soon to be published—as she tells us in the following interview—by the University of Alabama Press. Among her other works is an account of the Order of St. Birgitta, a Swedish order of nuns (to whom she has given the estate in Darien); the book will soon be published simultaneously in Sweden and by Herder and Herder, New York.

Marguerite now lives modestly on the grounds of the estate where she was born and raised. A devotee of peace, she has attended many world peace conferences and has tried, like Thoreau, to withhold taxes from a government which engages in wars she believes to be unjust. Says Robert P. Saalbach, who has known her since 1950: "Marguerite is one of the most amiable and remarkable women I have ever met."

Recent biographers, such as W.A. Swanberg, did not have your opportunity to know Dreiser personally. Do you feel that any omissions or distortions have resulted from this lack of first-hand knowledge?

Yes, indeed. Recent biographers and commentators such as W.A. Swanberg and Robert Penn Warren have failed to understand the complex character of Dreiser. Had they known him, they would have had a different impression of his personality as a whole, and not needed to try so hard to reconstruct him piecemeal, from his works and many disparate facts, completing a giant picture-puzzle of him (obviously puzzling to them) rather than a portrait. However, it is always difficult to comprehend an excessively high-powered, creative *temperament*—a word which Dreiser loved and which leads me to the next question.

In the perspective of time, what strikes you as Dreiser's most memorable characteristic, or perhaps your most memorable recollection of him?

Dreiser's personality, or *temperament*, was the most memorable thing about him. It was a combination of his own intense sense of life, compassion and magnetism. It was the deep source of all his understanding of human beings—and of his work itself.

After abandoning it for a considerable period, Dreiser in his last days attempted to complete the Cowperwood trilogy. Can you explain why, in these final years and in failing health, he felt compelled to finish The Stoic?

Quite understandably, Dreiser wanted to finish the *Trilogy*, which he had started so long ago—the concentrated study of the remarkable business career of Charles Yerkes, whom Dreiser called Cowperwood. (In this connection, Mr. Warren makes a valuable contribution in defining the *trilogy* as a new *genre* of novel writing.) Two volumes were completed and Dreiser had even taken a trip to England to collect material on Yerkes' building of the London subway system. Dreiser had received inside information from newspaper men as to Cowperwood's death and as to how his body was surreptitiously taken into his own Fifth Avenue mansion during the night, against the wishes of his estranged wife, who awoke to find him there in the morning. It would have been a shame to miss this last episode!

In "The Alabaster Protege: Dreiser and Berenice Fleming" (American Literature, *43:229-230*), *Philip Gerber states that* The Stoic's *final section "was assembled by Helen Dreiser, who had an interest in seeing it end with the conversion of Berenice. Left to his own devices, Dreiser the Naturalist might have, before allowing publication, withheld or restructured the conclusion." Would you agree with this assumption?*

Yes—Helen Dreiser did help Dreiser to finish *The Stoic*, during the last months of his life. Certainly the last chapters would have been written more powerfully, as a conclusion to the whole *Trilogy*, had Dreiser been in better form. However, both Helen and Dreiser had been deeply interested in Hindu thought. At an earlier period, Helen had studied Yoga and Dreiser had been fascinated by the writings of the famed Mme. Blavatsky, as by all metaphysical speculations. Dreiser was anxious to end *The Stoic* on a spiritual note, and Berenice seemed the logical character to experience some inner awakening. (Certainly, Yerkes did not.) I believe that Dreiser let Helen work this out in her own way, once he had laid Yerkes, or Cowperwood, to rest.

You note in Theodore Dreiser: A New Dimension *that once a book was beyond the creative stage, Dreiser became bored with it. Do you feel that this lack of intense interest allowed editors to take undue liberties with the text?*

Yes, I do. He realized that most editors did not understand his own peculiar style, consisting of long rhythms and small, sometimes curiously placed words. His editors were always anxious to cut and edit, and he was not inclined to quarrel with them, provided his work could come out.

What would you consider to be Dreiser's "typical" response to critical opinions of his work?

Contrary to some opinions, Dreiser was a humble artist and did value appreciation of his work. However, adverse criticism did not bother him. He said once that he had a certain vision of life—"you may not like it, you may not agree with it, but it is the only vision that I can give you." (These were the approximate words.)

As you edit Notes on Life, *do you find that Dreiser's thinking was as muddled and inconsistent a mishmash of ideas as it has often been portrayed—or is a meaningful and coherent pattern emerging?*

I believe readers will find that a meaningful pattern emerges from Dreiser's *Notes on Life*. But don't expect them to be entirely free of paradox or mystery. People whose thoughts are never "muddled" or "inconsistent," but always neat and orderly, are those who have never tunnelled very far under the surface of life nor risen to heights of creative speculation.

Was Dreiser's purported return to formal religion in his last years real or only apparent?

Dreiser never returned to any formal religion (he had been brought up as a Catholic), but all through his life he had a fascination for religious and spiritual thought. He was always able to portray religious characters such as *The Doer of the Word* or Rev. McMillan in *An American Tragedy* with convincing sincerety. He liked to quote the Bible (King James version). Certain passages of the Gospels, the Sermon on the Mount, were infinitely beautiful to him.

In his new book on Dreiser, Robert Penn Warren says: "We must emphasize that once An American Tragedy *was written, Dreiser's mind moved more and more toward generalization and abstraction, and that all the unfriendly criticism of Dreiser as an intellectual becomes more and more to the point" (p. 92). Do you agree?*

No, I'm sorry I can't agree with many things said by Mr. Warren, and here he seems to ignore the specific political writings of Dreiser, as well as his continuing search for new facts of science, to be incorporated into his *Notes on Life*—not to mention his carefully prepared and documented study of Quaker life and the murder case, drawn upon for the tragedy in *The Bulwark*. Besides, I don't think that a craetive artist like Dreiser should be classified or criticized as an *intellectual*. That word connotes so much less than what he was.

Since Dreiser finished both The Bulwark *and* The Stoic *in the last year of his life, is it really fair to say that* The Bulwark *is a better book than* The Stoic? *Aren't those who praise* The Bulwark *indulging in wishful thinking?*

Certainly, *The Bulwark* is a better book than *The Stoic*, but both are important in the final estimation of Dreiser's accomplishment. Both were planned far ahead, and particularly in the case of *The Bulwark*, matured in Dreiser's mind for many years. The Quaker study has a subtle quality which escapes many, but it is really an essence of Dreiser's reaction to the material and spiritual elements of life—specifically to banking and religion. As I have pointed out elsewhere, the book has the disarming quality of some of that simple Bach music that lay long unappreciated.

As diverse minds as that of Rufus Jones, the late Quaker leader, and the contemporary Soviet critic Zassoursky have praised *The Bulwark* as one of Dreiser's best novels.

What criteria did you and Professor McAleer use to reduce Dreiser's massive Notes on Life *to publishable size?*

We sought to bring out the most original thoughts and literary qualities which could convey Dreiser's reactions to life, with a minimum of repetition and quotations from the works of others. For practical purposes, there was no use of compiling a huge volume uninviting to the touch and eye of the average reader. Another volume or two of parallel *Notes on Life* might be added later, but we believe that we have selected the most representative and important material.

When will Notes on Life *be published?*

Notes on Life will be published by the University of Alabama Press in September, 1972.

Will Notes on Life *change our thinking about Dreiser in any way?*

Notes on Life will reveal Dreiser in a new light. However, readers who have understood him in the first place will find that their thinking about him will not be changed in any radical way, but rather enhanced. (See question 19.)

Was Dreiser's high opinion of Notes on Life *exaggerated?*

No. As I have said, Dreiser did not have an exaggerated opinion of himself nor of his own work. But he considered this subject tremendously important, because it was an attempt to understand the very force and meaning of human existence. He quoted many scientists and philosophers whose knowledge he considered far superior to his own, offering human and literary comment on it, and often expressing admiration and awe.

How do you reconcile Dreiser's late religiosity with his late decision to join the Communist Party?

Dreiser was always for the underdog, and his life and work were motivated by a deep love of humanity. This innate *religiosity*--I do not like the word, but am using it to answer your question--was not something that developed only late in his life, although perhaps he expressed it in a more obvious way in his last works. It found its echo in the concept of socialism, of which communism is a variation. The brotherhood of man and the right of everyone to share in the benefits of life is basic to Christian thought as expressed in the Gospels. Dreiser, like Hewlitt Johnson, the *Red Dean* of Canterbury, saw no contradiction between religion and

a revolutionary betterment of society.

Warren dismisses A Gallery of Women *as "a sort of trophy room in print." Is that a fair estimate?*

Again, No. Dreiser's *Gallery of Women* was an intimate study of the lives and characters of various women he had known, some intimately and some merely as acquaintances. This typical interest in women and in what makes them react the way they do was a life-long preoccupation of Dreiser's, beginning with *Sister Carrie.*

You have described Dreiser as "a natural mystic." Would you elaborate?

The dictionary defines a mystic as "one who professes to undergo mystical experiences by which he intuitively comprehends truths beyond human understanding." Dreiser was always aware of mystical forces, as was Thoreau, and he approached them through nature rather than through orthodox religious belief. This is what I mean by his being a *natural* mystic. I use *natural* in both senses of the word. It was natural to him to respond to the beauty and mystery of nature ever since he had gone into the woods as a boy, and sat long hours observing insects by the pools he found. This sense of wonder never left him. A natural response to nature, like a natural response to music, defies intellectual definition. As Dreiser said in *The Bulwark,* "There is a wisdom that is related to beauty only, that concerns itself with cloud forms and wild vines tendrils, whose substance is not substance but dreams only. And whose dreams are entangled with the hopes and yearnings of all men."

What kind of readership will be interested in Notes on Life?

All who are interested in Dreiser himself and all who are interested in *life,* particularly its scientific and seemingly phenomenal phases.

Will students of Dreiser's novels find their perceptions enhanced by Notes on Life? *If so, which novels will they bear most specifically on?*

Yes, I believe they will find many echoes of Dreiser the novelist in this work. Perhaps *The Bulwark* announces most specifically Dreiser's love of nature and his belief in a creative force. There is hardly a novel which does not reflect Dreiser's metaphysical interests in some degree.

Do you have any Dreiser projects planned for the future?

Yes. I have written a long essay on his style and I plan a book of letters from Dreiser with commentary making a further interpretation of his temperament as I see it. I feel this may be important "for the record," as so many people have misunderstood him.

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Dreiser and Joe McCullagh

Little Mack: Joseph P. McCullagh of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, by Charles C. Clayton. Southern Illinois University Press, 1969. Illus., 266 pp., index, $8.95.

Dreiser specialists will remember Joe McCullagh, who hired Dreiser in 1892. At that time, the twenty to twenty-one year old reporter came up against a "short, thick, rather pugnacious and Napoleonic" person of "Irish extraction"[1] who was all of fifty years old. He also faced a town which, "contrasted to Chicago ... was not a metropolis at all."[2] Indeed, Charles Clayton tells us, "St. Louisans in 1875 took their newspapers seriously and felt a personal relationship to the owners and editors," so that McCullagh found he had to draw a sharp distinction between the "editorial department and the counting room"[3] if he was going to be able to run the paper.

Dreiser came to McCullagh, Saint Louis, and the *Globe-Democrat* from the Chicago *Globe*, and Clayton reminds us of Dreiser's report in *A Book About Myself* that the *Globe*'s city editor, McEnnis, had said that to work for "Mack" was "one of the best opportunities he could have."[4] However, Professor Clayton reminds us, Dreiser did cause embarrassment for McCullagh, as when his poetic raptures over the singing of a "young Negro woman" led the *Post-Dispatch* to make a personal attack on McCullagh, the boss, even though the editors were quite aware that Dreiser had written the story.[5]

The apocryphal story Dreiser tells of how he came to leave the *Globe-Democrat* is, we learn,

> . . . still told to newcomers in the paper's city room. The yarn has taken on the patina of age and has been embellished with the fanciful details of reporters who have

passed it on through the years. As it is told today, Dreiser was assigned to review a play to be presented by a traveling company scheduled to arrive in St. Louis that afternoon. It was a cold, blustery Sunday in early April and Dreiser had other ideas for the evening, presumably romantic. The obvious solution was to write the review in advance, which Dreiser did, praising it extravagantly. Unfortunately, due to the weather, none of the three touring companies scheduled for performances in St. Louis were able to reach the city and there was no performance. McCullagh, so the story goes, notified the city editor that Mr. Dreiser's services would no longer be required.[6]

Dreiser's version of the story is then told, and Professor Clayton remarks: "Time may have softened Dreiser's memory."[7] It would appear, from what else is known about McCullagh, that he did fire reporters, including "the first reporter he met when he entered the office."[8] But, Charles Clayton adds, "Of course most of them were rehired within a few hours."[9] At any rate,

> Dreiser in retrospect did not hold a grudge. He wrote that it was not until long after he left the paper, "when I was much better able to judge him and his achievements, that I understood what a big man he was. He seemed to have the desire to make the paper not only good, but great, and from my own memory and impression it was both. It had catholicity and solidity in editorials and news. Its editorials were in the main wise and jovial, often beautifully written by McCullagh himself."[10]

And, if the picture of "Little Mack" which emerges from Charles Clayton's biography is to be believed, Dreiser's judgment was right.

--Robert P. Saalbach
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[1]Clayton, p. 6. This is Dreiser's description from *A Book About Myself*.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 90, from *A Book About Myself*.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 106.

[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 204-5. Clayton continues on p. 205: ". . . he did not reprimand Dreiser. His only action was to walk out to the city room with a copy of the edition carrying the review and tell Mr. Mitchell, the city editor: 'I don't think a thing like that ought to appear in the paper. It is a bit too high-flown for our audience. Your reader should have caught it.'" Although Clayton appears here to be relying heavily on Dreiser's *A Book About Myself*, he does, evidently, feel that Dreiser has caught the "spirit" of "Little Mack." See notes 1 and 2 above.

[6]*Ibid.*, pp. 205-6. Another "editorial" from the *Post-Dispatch* is here quoted, accusing McCullagh of seeing three different plays in three different places on the same night and at the same time--but, again, this is apparently taken from *A Book About Myself*.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 207.

[8]*Ibid.*

[9]*Ibid.*

[10]*Ibid.* On p. 226, Clayton quotes Dreiser to the effect that "if [McCullagh] ever had a crony, it was not known in the reporters' room. . . He was a solitary or an eccentric." Then he adds: "Yet Dreiser insisted that McCullagh 'was of immense significance to his staff and the natives. Plainly, he was like a god to many of them . . . He was held in high esteem by his staff, and he was one of the few editors of his day who really deserved to be.'" Again, Clayton tends to agree with Dreiser's judgment.

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Dreiser News & Notes

A brief progress report on *DN* for our readers. As we conclude our second year of publication we are pleased to report a total of 203 subscribers, with the likelihood of an increased readership in years to come as word of *DN* spreads among fellow Dreiserians and libraries. We are still, alas, in the red, so we

would appreciate the names of any potential subscribers you might care to suggest. Send us the addresses and we will send brochures and sample copies. If you are attached to an academic institution, perhaps you could put in a good word for us at the library periodicals desk? . . . . With this issue, too, we say farewell to Assistant Editor Phyllis Townsley Haddix, whose assistance and cool judgment were invaluable as we put the early issues of *DN* together. Phyllis is now secretary for Associate Dean Marvin Carmony here at ISU, and our new Gal Friday is Barbara White . . . . Our next issue's interviewee will be Neda Westlake, curator of the Dreiser collection at the U. of Pennsylvania's Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library. Readers are invited to address questions they might have for Miss Westlake to the editors . . . . Joseph P. Griffin is now writing a Ph.D. dissertation on the short stories of Dreiser, under the direction of Professor Joseph X. Brennan at the U. of Notre Dame . . . . An article by Sheila Jurnak, entitled "Popular Art Forms in *Sister Carrie*," has been accepted for publication in *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* . . . . Joseph Barr is researching a Paul Dresser biography--a work that should answer several questions about the Dreiser family's years in Terre Haute. Anyone having access to Dresser materials can reach Mr. Barr at 11 Marigold Place, Terre Haute, Ind . . . . At the American Studies Association meeting in Toledo in October 1969, Neil Leonard of the U. of Pennsylvania delivered a speech entitled "Dreiser and Music" . . . . The Theodore Dreiser number in the U. of Minnesota *Pamphlets on American Writers* series, by W.M. Frohock, is scheduled for publication in Spring 1972 . . . . An article by Edward Dahlberg, entitled "Dahlberg on Dreiser," with some personal memories of TD, appeared in *The New York Times Book Review* for 31 Jan. 1971 on page 2 . . . . An essay on *An American Tragedy* appears in *Naturalistic Triptych: The Fictive and the Real in Zola, Mann, and Dreiser* (Random House, 1970), by Haskell M. Block, Professor of Comparative Literature at The City University of New York . . . . On the rare-book market a first edition of *Dreiser Looks at Russia* goes for $10 at Jeff Wilson, Newtown Square, Pennsylvania; J&S Fine Books lists an uncut limited edition (795 copies) of *An American Tragedy*, two volumes, signed by TD, for $65 . . . . Reports Ellen Moers: "I know of one more Dreiser fan in England--C.P. Snow--who writes: '*An American Tragedy* has its place among the "great" novels in a sense, and to an extent, that no other American novel has, and, I might add, in a sense not possessed by any English novel since *Little Dorrit*.'" . . . . In Ernest Lockridge's novel, *Hartspring Blows His Mind* (New American Library, 1968), the protagonist--described as a "father, voyeur, teacher, self-displayer, war hero, lover, salesman of encyclopedias, madcap comedian, and Prince of Life"--works (feebly) on a half-finished Dreiser dissertation amidst some interesting adventures. In fact, verrry interesting.