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Two Literary Responses to American Society in
the Early Modern Era; A Comparison of
Selected Novels by Theodore Dreiser and Upton
Sinclair in Relation to their Portrayal of
the Immigrant, the City, the Business Tycoon,
Women, and the Problem of Labour, 1900-1929.

by

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SUMMARY

This thesis analyses the responses of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair to American society in the early modern era through their treatment of the immigrant, the city, the business tycoon, women, and the labour problem. The role of Dreiser and Sinclair as critics of American society has often been dealt with and highly praised. Although the thesis also discusses this particular aspect, its main purpose lies with the comparison of Dreiser's and Sinclair's ideological and literary responses to these socio-economic issues.

The study starts with an account of the literary climate of the time. It shows that American literature at the close of the nineteenth century and in the early beginning of the twentieth century stems from the socio-economic and political unrest of the Gilded Age. American writers demonstrated an increasing concern with the evil consequences of the new technological development and felt it was their duty to record the prevailing conditions and express their reactions. They used the realist technique to describe things as they were and adopted naturalism to give a scientific study of their society. As a mirror of American society at the outset of the twentieth century, American fiction reflected the unrest and contradictions of this period and gave a clearer insight into the inner responses of American writers to the new order. It revealed that in spite of a general feeling of anxiety and disillusionment among American writers, individual reactions against the current events were diverse. They varied from an attitude of resignation and pessimistic speculations about America's future to an active desire to break rising capitalism and to reform American society. This analysis of Dreiser's and Sinclair's responses to some of the problems of America has been placed to a large extent in this divided socio-economic and literary climate. Thus while the comparison shows the two writers' strong indictment of American society, it also shows two distinct ideological and literary responses to its upheavals.

Then the main body of the study divides into six chapters. Chapter one compares the socio-political and literary views of Dreiser and Sinclair and gives, thus, an idea about the spirit with which they treated their subject matter and the course of their literary works. This chapter also deals with the relationship between Dreiser and Sinclair in an attempt to find traces of a debate between the two writers on the socio-economic and literary situations in America. The following chapters focus on Dreiser's and Sinclair's treatment of the immigrant, the city, the business tycoon, women, and the labour problem. Each of these chapters starts with a brief historical account of the subject of study as a background to the fiction. Then it shows Dreiser's and Sinclair's respective concern with, and experience of, the problem, and moves onto the analysis of their literary treatment of it.

The aim of this thesis has been to show that no matter what their artistic, ideological, and philosophical beliefs, American writers in the years of unrest which followed the large-scale industrialisation in their country, were called to assume their social responsibilities and contribute to the cause of social improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

I

One of the most important phases in American history is that which came to be called the Gilded Age. It corresponds roughly to the 1880s and the 1890s and was characterised by the occurrence of socio-economic, political, and cultural events, which transformed the lives of the American people, and laid the foundations of modern America. In this period the United States saw tremendous economic progress and constituted a serious challenge to the most advanced European nations. However, the economic progress of the post-Civil War was accompanied by a variety of evil consequences and opened an era of social unrest and political turmoil. Clashes between the exponents of the new economic development and those who became victims of the profound changes became frequent and were often violent. In face of these socio-economic upheavals and of the subsequent threat to American ideals, writers and philosophers in America shared the anxieties of the majority of the people and directed their attention increasingly to the changing situation.

The Gilded Age has been the subject of many historical and cultural works. In their attempts to explain the emergence of the United States as a world power after the first World War, or to analyse the cultural evolution of American society, various scholars have given a large place to the study of this particular era in their

works. Others have devoted to it complete studies. The following are a few examples among many others. In The Age of the Economic Revolution 1876-1900, Carl N. Degler gives a general but an illuminating account on the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, and shows its strong impact on various spheres of American society.¹ Similarly Ray Ginger in The Nationalization of American Life 1877-1900 (1965), offers a series of documents 'to assist the instructor and the student to come to terms, with a puzzling era of American history.'² The four parts division of his book which concentrate mainly on 'The Business and Economic History' and 'The Social and Intellectual History', 'The Political and Constitutional History' and 'History of Foreign Relation' made it possible for him to cover and give clear insights into wider aspects of American life in this period. The Gilded Age: A reappraisal (1963), edited by H. Wayner Morgan is also interesting because it consists of a collection of essays which treat separately many of the important socio-economic and cultural issues (e.g. the problem of labor, the robber barons, the rise of realism, etc.) that characterised America in the Gilded Age.³

Two other important works focus mainly on the cultural evolution of the American society in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. In The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (1982), Alan

Trachtenberg takes some of the prominent issues in the period under review and analyses their role in transforming American culture and shaping a new vision of American society. As the title of his book indicates Alan Trachtenberg calls this transformation process, 'the Incorporation of America' by which he means, 'the emergence of a changed, more tightly structured society with new hierarchies of control, and also changed conceptions of that society, of America itself.'⁴ While suggesting that this process was general and continuous, Alan Trachtenberg also emphasizes the fact that it occurred in a period which was marked by 'clashing perspectives and practices'. It is precisely the clashing perspectives and practices characterising the intellectual and artistic life of America in this era which constitute the subject of Peter Conn's The Divided Mind: Ideology and Imagination in America 1898-1919 (1983). 'My interest here', as Peter Conn states '...is in the pattern of contrariety...', or 'the conflict ... between tradition and innovation, between control and inadequacy, between order and liberation.'⁵ Peter Conn analyses these antagonisms through the study of some of the literary, philosophical and artistic works which were produced between 1898 and 1917. The two sides of America's divided mind, as he concludes, were embodied in the opposite positions held on the one hand by Henry James and on the other by Emma Goldman,

James peering anxiously back to some lost condition of well-ordered social harmony, Goldman gazing hopefully ahead toward a future of spontaneous cooperation.⁶

Perhaps this difference of attitude towards the problems of America is best reflected in Emma Goldman's ardent fight to bring about social reforms and James' self-exile in Europe.

As was the case with their fellow artists and philosophers, and indeed the majority of the population of the United States, American writers were deeply affected by the advent of the Industrial Revolution. American literature, especially in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, stems from the considerable economic and social transformations of the 1880s and the 1890s, and is, to a large extent, a description of American society at the advent of the huge technological development. Many critics have emphasized the impact of the socio-economic background of the Gilded Age on the emergence of a new literature in America. Alfred Kazin, for example, wrote in Native Grounds (1942),

Our modern literature is at bottom only the expression of our modern life in America ... It was rooted in nothing less than the transformation of our society in the great seminal years after the Civil War. It was rooted in that moving and perhaps inexplicable moral transformation, life, thought and manners under the industrial capitalism and science whose first great recorder was not Dreiser, but Howells.⁷

Undoubtedly 'the Dean of American Letters' played a significant role in making aspects from his country's everyday life the main concern of American writers, but it was only with Dreiser that such tradition reached its peak and established itself as a mode of writing.

American writers responded with great uneasiness and discomfort to the profound changes of the 1880s and 1890s. For one thing they were appalled by the conditions in which many people lived and by the widening gap between rich and poor, the growing corruption in the political and economic life of America and the feeling of disorder created by the rise of the cities. For another they worried about the progressive degradation of the nation's moral values and the very future of America. The unprecedented technological development emerged as a second revolution, and, like the Civil War, it was to test the strength and unity of the new nation. Many of the American writers experienced more or less the current socio-economic events either through their journalistic profession (e.g. W.D.Howells, S. Crane, T. Dreiser) or simply as the majority of American people. Because they could not remain aloof from these changes which were transforming their country and their own lives beyond recognition, American writers used their works not only to expose the prevailing conditions, but also to question them and voice their concern.

These writers' increasing depictions of the new happenings contributed to the development of realism in America. Since William Dean Howells realism became indeed the major tool of work of American writers. However, realism flourished in America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century not only because it was a suitable literary technique which helped American writers to depict things as they were. Realism also developed in America out of a reaction against earlier literary modes, such as romanticism and the overt symbolism of the New England School.⁸ Moreover it emerged as a forceful response to the socio-economic upheavals of the new world. American realistic fiction in this period was also a literature of protest. Through his collection of short stories, Main Travelled Roads (1891), Hamlin Garland, for instance became the spokesman of the deprived Western farmers. In his most important story 'Under The Lion's Paw', he gave an example of how American farmers were robbed of their lands and reduced to poverty. Garland's use of the economic ideas of the reformer Henry George in some of his works has often helped him plead for the farmers' cause and strengthened his protests. Other American writers like Upton Sinclair and Jack London went a step further and used their works to urge for the implementation of socio-economic reforms. They used the realistic technique to

expose in detail the disastrous consequences of industrial capitalism and went on to suggest means to solve the problems of their country (e.g. Socialism).

The late nineteenth-century American writers also adopted realism because it gave them the opportunity to treat new subjects peculiar to America, and rid American literature of its colonial past. In 1894 Hamlin Garland wrote an essay entitled, 'Provincialism' in which he advocated the liberation of American literature and suggested the treatment of a variety of subjects to give it its American identity. Among these he recorded,

The subtle changes of thought and of life that have come with the rise of a city like St Paul or Minneapolis; the life of saw mills and shingle mills ... then there is the mixture of races; the coming in of the Germans, the Scandinavians ... Then there is the building of railroads, with all their trickery and false promises and worthless bonds; the deepening of social contrasts ...⁹

However it was the increasing treatment of these new subjects by American writers which caused a certain resistance to the development of realism in America. Opposition came especially from the American middle-class bourgeoisie which constituted the large part of the reading public. They reacted to the new realism because it no longer reflected their ideals and social manners, but focused instead on America's current socio-economic problems and the way of life of the poor. Concern with

America's ugliest aspects could not but lead according to the middle class and genteel audience to the degradation of American literature. Reactions to the new mode of writing also increased because, at the close of the nineteenth century, some of the American writers, such as Stephen Crane and Frank Norris, took the doctrine of realism a step further. To the useful tools of the realistic method they added new elements and came to work increasingly within the context of naturalism. Unlike realism, naturalism was not only a literary technique, but also a philosophy which helped American writers to view American society in new ways. By adopting the naturalist doctrine these writers wanted to give a scientific character to their study of the new industrialised American society. They were no longer concerned with exposing aspects from American everyday life only, but also sought to determine and explain the causes which were responsible for the prevailing conditions.

American naturalist novelists were helped in such a task by the evolutionist theories of Darwin and Spencer. Darwin's and Spencer's works, especially On the Origin of Species (1859) and First Principles (1862), were introduced in America when the country was undergoing the large scale industrialisation, and had an immediate success among readers. The new theories which had a strong impact on various spheres of American life were also speedily adopted by American writers. Given increasing social disorder, American writers used the evolutionist theories derived

from the animal world to explain the jungle-like character of their country and men's behaviour in such an environment. In their analysis these writers also borrowed some of the Zolaesque principles and focused particularly on the following "natural" elements, heredity, environment, and the role of external forces. These elements were indeed regarded by the naturalist writers as the key-factors in the study of people's situation and their behaviour. In McTeague (1899), for example, Frank Norris, Zola's greatest admirer, created a hero whose life is dominated by the drinking habits he inherits from his father. Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser, on the other hand, have shown in Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893) and Sister Carrie (1900), the evil effects of the environment on their heroines. Maggie is destroyed and Carrie becomes a "fallen woman" because they cannot resist the harshness of their surrounding and have to submit to its socio-economic dictates. In many of his novels Dreiser also emphasizes the influence of external forces in determining his heroes' fate. Some of his heroes (e.g. Hurstwood and Clyde Griffiths) end tragically because they prove helpless in face of these forces.

II

Emphasis has been laid on the socio-economic and literary importance of the Gilded Age because the events of this era had a strong influence on the two writers I am

dealing with, that is Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair. It is only when set against the socio-economic and cultural background of the 1880s and the 1890s that most of Dreiser's and Sinclair's work can be understood. Dreiser and Sinclair were born in 1871 and 1878 respectively, that is at the beginning of the massive industrial expansion in America, and came to maturity at the turn of the century when the profound transformations caused by industrialisation reached a high peak. Hence Dreiser and Sinclair were able to witness, and to a large extent experience the major socio-economic and cultural events of the Gilded Age. Although Sinclair's novels dealt with here were published between 1906 and 1928¹⁰ they are set in an era (beginning of the twentieth century) whose socio-economic situation is to a great extent a continuous development of events which occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As for Dreiser's novels their setting is the 1880s and 1890s.

The choice of Dreiser and Sinclair as the subjects of this study is mostly determined by both writers' deep interest in the Gilded Age. Dreiser and Sinclair were two of the most prominent American writers who made themselves known because they became clearly involved in the social upheavals of this period, and gave a sharp and merciless description of them. Perhaps because they managed to catch the spirit of a significant phase of American history, Sinclair and especially Dreiser have been the subject of many detailed studies. The aim of this study

is not to give an assessment of Dreiser's and Sinclair's works. The purpose lies primarily in comparing and contrasting Dreiser's and Sinclair's responses to American society in the early modern era. More precisely their responses will be examined through the analysis of a selection of their novels and in relation to the specific socio-economic issues of immigration, the city, the business tycoon, women, and the problem of labour. This necessarily involves the problems of realism and naturalism which were the literary modes of writing adopted by Dreiser and Sinclair.

There are a few works which were devoted to Dreiser's treatment of the city, women and the business tycoon.¹¹ However, the merit in dealing with Dreiser again lies in the comparison. By comparison of Dreiser with Sinclair I hope to enrich the current discussion of Dreiser's literary handling of some of the socio-economic issues of the Gilded Age, and to clarify his response to the early modern era. Apart from the immigration question, an analysis of Sinclair's treatment of the other issues has rarely been attempted. So it is a good opportunity to do so here. Given the historical and political importance of the period under review in America, Dreiser's and Sinclair's responses to the events of this era will be also placed in a socio-

political context. Sinclair, as is well known, made his reputation as a fervent socialist; while Dreiser, in spite of his early political absence, ended up as a member of the American Communist Party.

The focus in this study is on Dreiser's and Sinclair's treatment of the specific subjects of the immigrant, the city, the business tycoon, women, and the problem of labour, for at least two reasons. First, these issues emerged in the 1880s and the 1890s as the most important socio-economic events which had a strong impact on the shaping of modern America. Second, they have acquired a major literary importance. They have indeed played an important role in enriching American literature and favouring the development of realism in America. As the most prominent phenomena of American everyday life they could not but attract the attention of American writers. They also gave rise to the creation of new literary genres such as the city novel, immigrant literature, and the business novel. Today the importance of these issues in American literature is incontestable. This is clearly indicated by, and emphasized in, such critical studies as Blanche H. Gelfant's The American City Novel (1970), Fay M. Blake's The Strike in the American Novel (1972), The Faces of Eve: Women in the Nineteenth-Century American Novel (1976) by Judith Fryer, The City, the Immigrant and American Fiction, 1880-1920 (1977) by David M. Fine, and many works on the businessman and the business novel.¹² The

fact that through their treatment of the socio-economic problems American writers often had to concentrate on the lower classes, and were led to express their reactions against the chaotic order prevailing in their country, also contributed to the emergence of protest and proletarian fictions in American literature.

A word must be also said about the dates mentioned in the title of this work (i.e. 1900 and 1929). They have a certain significance in that 1900 marked the beginning of Progressivism and is convenient for both Dreiser's and Sinclair's early work. At this point also American people wondered what the twentieth century had in store for their nation and themselves, and they also looked back with uneasiness to yesterday's socio-economic upheavals. Hence their immediate hopes were for a peaceful and prosperous new era. 1929 saw the Wall Street crash which put an end to the post-first World War economic boom and plunged America and indeed the world into the great depression. Although important the two dates do not, however, mark an era which I am directly dealing with. Rather, they delimit the period of time in which Dreiser's and Sinclair's novels analysed in this study were published. Dreiser's Sister Carrie was published in 1900 while Boston was published in 1928, a year before the Wall Street crash.

Finally, this study is organised as follows. The first chapter deals with the socio-political and literary views of Dreiser and Sinclair, as a kind of introduction to

the analysis of their treatment of the chosen themes in the following chapters. At the beginning of this chapter the comparisons made by some of the critics between Dreiser and Sinclair are discussed, and the relationship between the two writers is also briefly referred to. The other chapters (2 to 6) deal with Dreiser's and Sinclair's treatment of the issues proper. At the beginning of each chapter a brief historical account of the subject of study is given in order to show its impact on the development of American society. Then the treatment by some of the American writers of the issue dealt with is briefly discussed in order to have a general idea about its representation in American literature. The last and major part of each chapter focuses, first, on Dreiser's and Sinclair's direct concern with the specific socio-economic issue, and second, on their literary treatment of it.

CHAPTER I The Socio-Political and Literary Views of

Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair

I. Two Critics of American Society

Comparing Theodore Dreiser with Upton Sinclair, Henry Steele Commager wrote in The American Mind (1950) about the two writers, 'These two major critics of American society differed profoundly in philosophy but not in analysis or diagnosis'. And explaining their philosophical differences, he stated,

Where Sinclair was animated by love for his fellow-men, Dreiser regarded them with dispassionate objectivity; where Sinclair was propagandist, Dreiser was a scientific observer; where Sinclair was a moralist, Dreiser pretended to amorality; where Sinclair was melioristic, Dreiser was desperate; where Sinclair regarded the titans of industry with loathing, Dreiser confessed a sneaking admiration for those who came to the top in the struggle for existence.¹

These are indeed some of the important aspects which characterised each of Dreiser and Upton Sinclair, and which can be regarded among the major differences between the two writers. Such profound differences in perception do not, however, make of Dreiser and Sinclair two extremely opposed novelists. As Henry S. Commager has also suggested in his comparison Dreiser and Sinclair meet in their responses to

the economic order prevailing in turn-of-the-century America, and especially its social disasters. Thus Commager concluded by stating,

Philosophically The Jungle and Sister Carrie, The Metropolis and The Financier, Boston and An American Tragedy, belong in different categories, but as indictment of American economy in the first quarter of the twentieth century they are interchangeable.²

That a parallel on the basis of their merciless and authentic descriptions of the crude realities of American society can be drawn between Dreiser and Sinclair seems accurate. If Dreiser and Sinclair managed to win the esteem of some influential critics, it is not so much for the artistic quality of their works as for their role as 'Les secrétaires' of the American society. Floyd Dell, Sinclair's biographer, has suggested in Upton Sinclair: A Social Protest (1927) that the writer is widely read abroad because '... the world has looked to American literature for realistic description and intellectual interpretation of it - and has found these things chiefly and best in the writings of Upton Sinclair'.³ R.E.Spiller, a literary historian of an established reputation echoed Floyd Dell as far as Dreiser was concerned. As he put it,

Because he reveals the very nerves of American society he has exerted a more profound, a more lasting influence than any other novelist on twentieth-

century realistic fiction in America - Several generations of writers are already his debtors.⁴

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Sinclair Lewis had also emphasized the important position that Dreiser held in American literature, and suggested the indebtedness of younger writers to him.⁵

Commager's suggestion that some of Dreiser's and Sinclair's novels are comparable can be justified. It is true that as far as the business novel is concerned it would be more appropriate to compare The Financier (1912) with Oil! (1927) where Sinclair, somehow in the manner of Dreiser, tried to capture some of the features typical of the American businessman. However, The Metropolis (1908) is also full of small or amateur businessmen whose only interests, like Frank Cowperwood, are the accumulation of wealth and the conquest of power. In both An American Tragedy (1925) and Boston (1928) Clyde Griffiths and Sacco Vanzetti end up tragically in the electric chair. Clyde's crime, however, is personal and illustrates the tragic failure of the Horatio Alger myth; whereas Sacco and Vanzetti are executed mainly because of their political ideals which are regarded as a threat to the foundations of American capitalism. Through their detailed descriptions of their heroes' trials Dreiser and Sinclair made a parody of American justice and demonstrated the corruption of the judges. Dreiser and Sinclair also made it clear that their heroes are victims of the established American social

order which reacted ruthlessly to the lower classes' threats to its privileges. That The Jungle (1906) is 'a book that interestingly compares with Sister Carrie' has been also suggested by Malcolm Bradbury in The Modern American Novel (1982).⁶ Bradbury starts his comparison of the two novels by stressing their common setting, that is Chicago. However, contrary to what Bradbury suggests, the Chicago of Sister Carrie and that of the Lithuanian family, as emerges from Dreiser's and Sinclair's descriptions respectively, are very different. Through the description of Carrie's search for a job and her various promenades in Chicago we are shown a large part of the city and its glittering aspects. The sweatshops and the giant department stores, the theatres and the restaurants, the parks and the beautiful houses of the suburban areas constitute the main characteristics of the Chicago where Sister Carrie starts her rise to success. Sinclair's description of Chicago in The Jungle is much more limited than Dreiser's, mainly because the writer rarely describes his heroes outside of their dehumanising meat-packing world. Although they live in Chicago Sinclair's hero, Jurgis, and his family remain alien to the growing city and its way of life. As Bradbury has also noted the city has the same attractive quality to Dreiser's heroine and Sinclair's Lithuanian family. Carrie Meeber as well as Jurgis and his relatives are some of the 'déracinés' who, filled with dreams and ambitions, decide to leave their

villages in order to seek wealth and fame in the growing American cities. Here the similarity between Sister Carrie and the Lithuanian heroes ends, for if Carrie manages to rise to a high position, Jurgis and Ona are crushed by their environment. Yet as Bradbury has pointed out one can take the parallel between Sister Carrie (1900) and The Jungle a step further, since in his decline Hurstwood, like Jurgis, goes through hard times, although as he also states,

Hurstwood ... fails from within, from a want of energy, Jurgis from without, through the corruption of the system.⁷

Jurgis, unlike Hurstwood, is saved thanks to his discovery of socialism, but both Dreiser and Sinclair proved faithful to the naturalist theories by showing their heroes gradually destroyed by forces in face of which they were helpless.

Unlike Henry Steele Commager and Malcolm Bradbury, David Karsner finds that Dreiser and Sinclair are too different to be compared.

Withal, the men are different, vastly different, in the novels they write, in their style and technique, and, what is more fundamental and significant, in their approach to life and its problems.⁸

David Karsner was certainly right to point out the writers' different style and technique, and approach to life. In his comparison Commager has also emphasized some differences. This in itself is an important point of contrast;

it would be interesting to analyse such differences in detail. Karsner's discussion of Dreiser and Sinclair came as an answer to Frank Harris' assertions. Harris, as Karsner has reported, "for fully fifteen minutes derided Dreiser and belittled him as a novelist," and called Upton Sinclair "America's foremost novelist and artist, although he has done little as yet to warrant my praises."⁹ Such, however, was not the opinion of David Karsner who stated, "After many years of reading I still say that Dreiser is the better novelist and artist, though Sinclair is the clearer and more incisive craftman."¹⁰

It emerges from the foregoing discussions of the critics that Sinclair and Dreiser can be indeed the subject of an interesting comparison, and that they present characteristics which can be closely analysed and contrasted. Before we look in detail at these aspects and analyse the two writers' literary views and their socio-political beliefs, let us first describe briefly their relationship.

II. The Dreiser-Sinclair Relationship

In his essay, 'The Epic Sinclair', Dreiser recalls that he had first met Upton Sinclair just before this latter began to write The Jungle. He described Upton Sinclair as "wide eyed, poetic, overflowing with Napoleonic vanity that was matched in the very same mind with a boundless desire to democratize the world."¹¹ Dreiser's

description reflects indeed some of Sinclair's characteristics, especially at the beginning of the century. A few years before he wrote The Jungle, Upton Sinclair discovered socialism and became a fervent social reformer.¹² His crusading efforts in order "to democratize the world" were immediately put into practice with his publication of The Jungle -a novel which is, according to Dreiser, "as significant ... at this hour as it was then and evolving not merely a literary sensation but an economic and social explosion."¹³ In 'The Epic Sinclair' Dreiser concentrated mainly on the electoral campaign that Sinclair was leading in order to become governor of California, under the heading Epic (End Poverty In California). As emerges from his essay, Dreiser came out strongly in favour of Upton Sinclair, since he was convinced that the man had an important programme to relieve the poor and the unemployed. Moreover, according to him Sinclair was a serious political figure who was genuinely concerned with the welfare of the American people, and who devoted his life to the implementation of social reforms.

In another article he published in The Clipper in 1940 Dreiser dealt more extensively with Sinclair, the writer, and his work. As was the case in the previous essay, in this article Dreiser highly praised Sinclair and his literary achievement. Dreiser admired Sinclair's novels and some of his non-fictional work because they are "full of truth, and very illuminating to many people".¹⁴

Moreover, he showed a great respect for Sinclair because, as he suggested, he was one of the rare American writers who undertook to explore a large sphere of American everyday life, and who told the truth about the dark realities of his country.

He got up and told Americans some of the things we most needed to know. He told us about the cynical hypocrisy and perversion of our 'Free Press' and our 'Christian churches'. He gave us in Oil! a wonderful study of the contrast between corporations and their underpaid labor, showing up the Fuhrers of American business for what they are ...¹⁵

However important Sinclair's description of the businessman and the business milieu is, it certainly is not as powerful and as detailed as Dreiser's own treatment of this subject in his 'Trilogy of Desire'. Perhaps because of his own desire to tell the truth about American society in his works, Dreiser saw in Sinclair some ally he needed.

In his article Dreiser also denounced those critics who failed to perceive Sinclair's particular merits, and who sought to belittle him. Dreiser suggested that most of the critics' hostility towards Sinclair stemmed from the fact that the writer "insists on revealing 'subversive' truths". Dreiser was all the more emphatic about the motive behind the critics' opposition to Upton Sinclair because, as he stated, he went himself through a similar experience. Thus he drew a certain parallel between himself and Upton Sinclair, and stressed their mutual role

as critics of American society. However, if he fared badly in the hands of American critics and failed to attract a wide audience, Sinclair, as Dreiser pointed out, had wide acclaim abroad where his novels have been translated in many languages and had an enormous sale, especially in Russia.

In his essay 'American Authors Popular in Soviet Russia' (1936), Andrew J. Steiger has dealt with the great esteem that Sinclair enjoyed in the U.S.S.R. According to him Sinclair came to be treated as a Soviet classic and was publicly honoured. Indeed after 1925 his works became state property. This decision of "the Peoples Commissariat of Education", as he has suggested, "was based on a previous decree of the council of the peoples commissars which declared the Russian writers^{such} as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenyev, Gogol, Chekov and others to be state property".¹⁶ Many of Sinclair's novels have been issued several times. "Such books as Jimmy Higgins have run through thirteen editions; King Coal, A Story of A Patriot, The Jungle, ran through ten editions; Love's Pilgrimage, five editions."¹⁷ Just before his visit to the U.S.S.R. in 1928, Dreiser was asked by a newspaper reporter, "... if he knew the writings of Upton Sinclair enjoyed the greatest popularity in the Soviet Union." Dreiser replied that "it is quite understandable," and added, "Well Upton Sinclair in his novels expresses the political and economic ideals of the Russian people."¹⁸ This is rather an off hand explanation

and differs greatly from Dreiser's analysis of Sinclair's work in The Clipper. It is true that the social justice and equality between the people that Sinclair frequently advocated in his novels, and his whole-hearted sympathies with the poor, constitute some of the ideals most cherished by the Russian people. However it would be a mistake to refer to Sinclair as the spokesman of the socio-economic and political ideals of the Russians. After all the subjects that Sinclair treated in his novels were proper to American society and were dealt with in order to show the inadequacies in the U.S. not the U.S.S.R. The remedies that Sinclair sometimes offered in order to solve these upheavals differ greatly from the revolutionary methods preached by the Communists in their aims to abolish Capitalism. Like Sinclair, Dreiser became very popular in Soviet Russia in the 1930s, thanks to An American Tragedy which was widely read especially among the workers. Perhaps the reason behind Dreiser's popularity in the U.S.S.R. also explains why Sinclair gained a great reputation in this country.

Sinclair did not leave any written criticism on Dreiser. The only appreciation of Dreiser and his work made by Sinclair we have is that which was reported by C. Hartley Grattan in his essay, 'Upton Sinclair on Current Literature' (1932). Sinclair, as H. Grattan stated, "holds

Dreiser in high esteem and considers An American Tragedy one of the great novels of the world."¹⁹ However, Sinclair did not fail to perceive the flaws in this novel. Sinclair's main criticism lies with Dreiser's clumsy style, and his misuse of English - a weakness which was very often pointed out by critics who dealt not only with An American Tragedy, but also with Dreiser's work in general. Like many other critics, Sinclair also objected to the length of this novel which is due to Dreiser's piling up of details. Hence "he insists that he (Dreiser) could, without marring the book, cut out one fourth of the material in An American Tragedy."²⁰ It is clear from Grattan's report An American Tragedy was the only novel among Dreiser's work that Sinclair dealt with. Sinclair also admired Dreiser because he became increasingly involved in the fight for social justice. For example, Sinclair was "deeply impressed with Dreiser's courage in going to the Kentucky coal fields to see for himself how badly American men and women can be treated."²¹ Sinclair had even written a letter to Dreiser where he congratulated him for his activities, and expressed his wishes to see him put his findings in a novel form.²²

The correspondence between Dreiser and Upton Sinclair amounts all in all to thirty letters. Judging from this number, it appears that the two writers had neither a long nor a regular correspondence. Similarly it does not seem as interesting as the correspondence that each of them had

with H.L.Mencken. Although Mencken was a well-known conservative Dreiser and Sinclair established a long friendship with him. They did so because they shared more or less his opinions on certain issues. Mencken was one of Dreiser's ardent supporters in his fight against the genteel tradition, and, like Sinclair, he criticised and ridiculed the American bourgeoisie. Similarly he had a hostile attitude towards the press. In 1920 when Sinclair published The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism, Mencken praised the book and wrote to him saying "you have done a good job in the book (The Brass Check). I have read it with great care, and find nothing in it that seems to me to be exaggerated".²³ Moreover, Mencken, Dreiser, and Sinclair, had frequently reacted against the poor status of American letters and the situation of American writers in an industrialised and business-minded society. There are two extended works which dealt with the exchange of letters that Mencken had with each of Dreiser and Sinclair. In his unpublished thesis, 'Two Beasts in the Parlor: The Dreiser-Mencken Relationship' (1979), Vincent de Paul Fitzpatrick III wrote that "the alliance between these men (Dreiser and Mencken) was a powerful force in American letters".²⁴ And in twelve chapters he showed the most important phases of this correspondence and analysed successively the men's political, philosophical, and literary affinities. In 'The Correspondence of H.-L.Mencken and Upton Sinclair: An Illustration of How Not to

Agree' (1967), David A. Remly suggested that the two writers corresponded for more than thirty years. They exchanged about 323 letters in which they discussed a variety of subjects. In his study Remly also described Mencken's and Sinclair's views on various issues, and stressed particularly the sharp contrast between them.²⁵

We have only a few of the thirty letters that Dreiser and Sinclair exchanged. They are short and in them no serious question about literature or a socio-economic and political issue was discussed. In two of his letters Dreiser dealt with Sinclair's E.P.I.C activities and gave his support to his programme. However, as he put it, "I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am in no position to undertake time-consuming labor in this field at this time."²⁶ In a letter dated December 18, 1924, Dreiser thanked Sinclair for sending him his play, Singing Jailbirds, but was unable to share the writer's optimism about the brotherhood of man. Moreover, he proved once again his attachment to his naturalism by stating, "I see the individual large or small - weak or strong - as predatory and nothing less."²⁷ When Dreiser's article on Sinclair appeared in The Clipper, Sinclair sent a brief letter to Dreiser saying "I want to express to you my great appreciation of your kind article in 'The Clipper'."²⁸ However, Sinclair did not discuss the content of Dreiser's article. As has been mentioned earlier, Sinclair also

wrote to congratulate Dreiser for his bold investigation of the miners' strike that broke out in the Harlan County coal fields, in Kentucky.

III. The Literary Views of Dreiser and Sinclair

An analysis of Dreiser's and Sinclair's literary views and the main characteristics of their fiction will cast a greater light on Commager's assumption that the two writers "differed profoundly in philosophy but not in analysis or diagnosis." First it is important to underline the impact of the American environment on Dreiser and Sinclair, and its role in determining the course of their work. Dreiser, for instance, had suggested on various occasions how "satisfying and stimulating" America could be for the artist. In his essay, 'America and the Artist', (1925) he stated,

It (America) has, or at least to my way of thinking it has, all of the social as well as the geographical and topographical variations which any artist could honestly desire ... And as for social, religious, moral, and political variations, pyrotechnics, idiosyncracies, it is as colourful to me as any other land could possibly be.²⁹

No works in American literature illustrate this statement better than those of Dreiser and Sinclair themselves. Most of Dreiser's novels are 'a picture of conditions' prevailing in American society at the close of the nineteenth century. As for Sinclair's novels they are

mostly based on a series of events that occurred in America, and like Dreiser's works, they also reflect the spirit of a particular epoch in American history.

That American society finds an extensive representation in the works of Dreiser and Sinclair is the result of the two writers' strong belief that the primary task of the artist or the writer is to represent life. This idea was often stressed by Dreiser and Sinclair in some of their writings on art and literature. Dreiser's argument about the importance of life as a basis for art is summed up in the following lines:

But all in all it is life that the artist is facing in any land or clime. Life with all its variations and difficulties, social, climatic, idiosyncratic; and these various aspects are not likely to prove colorless or without stimulus for the artist, assuming that he chances to appear ... For to me every life is a book or many books or many plays.³⁰

The word 'life' in this passage was stressed by Dreiser himself. The close link between life and literature is also emphasized by Dreiser's presentation of life as a text, or more precisely as a literary text.

Sinclair also echoed Dreiser in Mammonart (1925) when he wrote,

Art is a representation of life, modified by the personality of the artist, for the purpose of modifying other

personalities, inciting them to changes of feeling, belief, and action.³¹

While it shows a certain similarity between Dreiser's and Sinclair's views on art, this statement also goes a step further to suggest the purpose of art and how life should be represented. Dreiser and Sinclair also acknowledged the fact that between life and its artistic representation there is 'the personality of the artist' who deals with the material of life, and inevitably brings about modifications. However, while acknowledging this fact, they also stated that a certain degree of accuracy when representing life can be reached if the artist bears in mind the two key-words, reality and truth. Sinclair wrote that "Art begins as the effort of man to represent reality;"³² while Dreiser suggested that "the sum and substance of literary as well as social morality may be expressed in these words ... tell the truth."³³ However the controversial debate on realism is very often caused by the confusion which surrounds the meaning or the interpretation of the two key-words, truth and reality. For instance, to tell the truth according to William Dean Howells meant that the American writer should confine himself to the description "of the more smiling aspects of life which are the more American."³⁴ The young generation of American writers, such as Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and Upton Sinclair, rejected this kind of truth and rebelled against Howells' 'tea-cup' realism.

What is the truth or reality, and how they should be represented depends greatly on the personality of the artist. As Frank Norris suggested "what mattered most was how you, the writer, chose to see things."³⁵ Dreiser's and Sinclair's works contain a large part of truth about American society and its dark realities. The subject matter of their work is certainly one of the aspects which led Commager to draw a parallel between the two writers. On the other hand, the difference of their philosophy pointed out by the same critic is the result of their perception of these truths, and especially of the way they treated them in their novels. Whereas Dreiser's representation of the raw material of American life is coloured by pessimism, Sinclair's vision of it, as reflected in his novels, shows a hopeful belief in reform. These two opposite attitudes which characterise two writers animated by the same desire to give a realistic description of the prevailing conditions in America, is largely the result of the strong impact that the evolutionary theories had on Dreiser, and Sinclair's acquaintance with the socialist doctrine.

In A Book About Myself (1922) Dreiser described briefly his discovery of the evolutionist philosophers, especially Spencer, and their influence on him. "At this time", Dreiser wrote, "I had the fortune to discover Huxley and Tyndall, and Spencer, whose introductory volume to his Synthetic Philosophy (First Principles) quite blew me, intellectually to bits."³⁶ One of the strongest and

immediate impacts of this discovery on Dreiser was that he became disillusioned with his earlier beliefs. As he put it,

Up to this time there has been in me a blazing and unchecked desire to get on and the feeling that in doing so we did get somewhere; now in its place was the definite conviction that spiritually one got nowhere, that there was no hereafter, that one lived and had his being because one had to, and that it was of no importance.³⁷

That man had no free will, and that he was a 'mechanism' - a sum of chemical compulsion, and was submitted to the influence of certain forces in his environment was one of the major Spencerian ideas that Dreiser often expressed his adherence to and illustrated in his work. One can read in his essay, 'Illusion called Life', "the dominant human mind thus far developed, as I see it at least, is at best a petty piece of machinery, in the main registering states or customs of the silliest possible nature."³⁸ In another essay called 'Equation Inevitable', he strongly stated, "I deny the doctrine of free will, or if man has a will, it is impotent, a mere wisp or feather individually or collectively against that which is making and working through him."³⁹ Since man had no control over the forces governing his environment he was constantly leading a hopeless and helpless struggle in pursuit of the often unattainable. Like many writers who succumbed to Spencer's influence, Dreiser also believed that the

conflicting forces and struggles that characterised the human world obeyed the law of the jungle, that is 'the survival of the fittest'. Dreiser's belief that this law regulated our world is furthermore emphasized in his novels by his use of animal images to illustrate people's relations. One of his heroes, Frank Cowperwood (The Financier (1912)), draws his first lesson about the ruthlessness of life from the lobster-squid incident he witnesses in his youth - a lesson which he constantly remembers in his rise to success. In his essay, 'Equation Inevitable' Dreiser drew once again a parallel between the human world and the animal environment when he wrote, "Man is an eating and a seeking animal, selfish and quite beyond redemption."⁴⁰

Under the influence of Spencer's theories Dreiser came to look at the conditions prevailing in American society with a gloomy eye. Since "nature would not or could not do anything for man," and since man himself was helpless - "he being product of these self-same accidental, indifferent and bitterly cruel forces"⁴¹ - Dreiser also lost faith in any possible improvement of the chaotic situation in his country, and retreated in a bitter pessimism. It is this pessimistic view of things coupled with a certain detachment which characterise Dreiser's novels.

Like Dreiser, Upton Sinclair was an acute observer of the shortcomings and the discrepancies in American society. Like Dreiser, he was also one of the people who suffered from these inequalities and personally experienced hard times. Moreover, Sinclair's experiences also led him to look at the state of things in his environment as obeying the law of 'the survival of the fittest'. The title of his successful novel, The Jungle, is a significant example. However, unlike Dreiser, Sinclair could not adopt pessimistic determinism as a philosophy of life, and was never satisfied with just describing the socio-economic problems of his country in his works. Literary realism for Sinclair was not an end in itself, as it was for Dreiser, but a means to an end. Sinclair used the realist technique because it helped him to expose clearly the evil consequences of capitalism, and ask for reforms in order to establish a better society.

In Mammonart (1925) Sinclair wrote,

It is this impulse to communicate ideas and emotions to others, that becomes the dominant motive in art, and is the determining factor in the greatness of art.⁴²

The quarrel with this statement will certainly be over the kind of ideas and emotions to be communicated. This is particularly true when it comes to Upton Sinclair. The ideas and emotions that went in Sinclair's works are those which were shaped by his socio-political beliefs, or simply the reproduction of certain socialist teachings. The

socialist doctrine helped Sinclair to have a better understanding of the causes of his own sufferings, and the inequalities existing in American society, mainly by explaining in secular and 'scientific' terms the rise of industrial capitalism and its evil effects on the masses. Moreover socialism emerged in Sinclair's eyes, thanks to its advocacy of collectivism and the better distribution of the huge wealth of the United States, as the best way towards the establishment of a just and equal society. Hence with realism which "... was the best way to 'tell the truth' in literature", the preaching of socialism which "was the only way to tell it in politics"⁴³ became the main features of Sinclair's novels. In most of his novels, through the use of his experiences and a thorough documentation, Sinclair laid bare the discrepancies between the 'two nations', and urged for reforms in line with the socialist doctrine. Sinclair himself summed up the subject matter of his fiction as follows:

Readers of my novels know that I have one favourite theme, the contrast of the social classes; there are characters from both worlds, the rich and the poor, and the plot is converted to carry you from one to the other.⁴⁴

The political nature of Sinclair's novels and the frequent recurrence of the above theme in most of his works are the result of the writer's conception of literature and art in general. Sinclair was indeed convinced that literature "was primarily a weapon in the class struggle",⁴⁵ and that

"All art is propaganda. It is universally and inescapably propaganda; sometimes unconsciously but often deliberately, propaganda."⁴⁶ This view is also maintained by many critics and writers. The most notable is George Orwell who comes closer to Sinclair, "Propaganda in some form or other lurks in every book, that every work of art has a meaning and a purpose - a political, social and religious purpose ..."⁴⁷ Moreover Sinclair used the two nations theme and appeared as a moralist because he also believed that "all art deals with moral questions; since there are no other questions."⁴⁸ Sinclair's views on art are rather limited and dogmatic. However, they illustrate largely the views held by the 'leftist' writers and critics. Their novels were expected to be politically committed by giving especially a 'progressist' interpretation of the class struggle and by defending the cause of the proletariat.⁴⁹

Like Sinclair and indeed the leftist writers, Dreiser was disheartened by the abuses of capitalism and became a merciless social critic. However, unlike these writers, Dreiser was unable to show a certain commitment in his novels because "he did not ... think that art should be used as a means of propaganda or to convey any kind of social message."⁵⁰

IV. The Socio-Political Views of Dreiser and Sinclair

There seems to be a general agreement between critics that Dreiser's socio-economic and political views were, to say the least, controversial. Dreiser came late to American politics and the defense of social causes. When he did so he often showed a certain inconsistency in his thoughts and was rarely convincing. Unlike Dreiser, Upton Sinclair was deeply involved in politics, and, throughout his life, he never stopped fighting for various causes and advocating socialism. Sinclair is more remembered by some people for his passionate socio-political struggle than as a novelist. However, like Dreiser's, Sinclair's political views are sometimes also criticised. On the other hand it is interesting to note that in spite of their different political involvement Dreiser and Sinclair came politically close to each other at certain points. Dreiser's enthusiastic response to Sinclair's E.P.I.C campaign, and his support of the movement is a significant example.

Dreiser's political evolution may be divided into three phases; first, the political absence - a phase which lasted until about 1918; second, the 'prise de conscience' which began in the 1920s and culminated with the publication of An American Tragedy in 1925; third the political involvement which started with Dreiser's trip to Russia and his participation in the defense of humanitarian causes, and which led to his association with the American Communist party a few months before his death.

It is indeed very odd that it took Dreiser a long time to get interested in the political affairs of America. Dreiser, as is well known, was born in one of the most significant phases of American history, and witnessed many of its socio-economic and political events that had an impact on the development of the American nation. Dreiser himself experienced many of the upheavals which characterised this period, and was for a long time one of the many victims that were struck by the evil consequences which accompanied the large scale industrialisation of America. However harsh experiences failed to make him a radical. Moreover, although he worked for a few years as a journalist - a profession which brought him in contact with many people and a variety of events - Dreiser was unable to grasp the importance of what he saw and respond accordingly.

Dreiser's attitude is all the more odd since many people, and especially some intellectuals, had reacted vigorously to the new developments in American society and their negative impact on the masses. William Dean Howells, one of the prominent American writers, became increasingly concerned with the upheavals of his country and tried to describe them in his last novels (e.g. Annie Kilburn (1889); A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890)). Towards the end of his career he became disillusioned with American ideals, and turned to socialism. Edward Bellamy and Henry George were also some of the voices of protest. In his

utopian novel, Looking Backward:2000-1887 (1888), Edward Bellamy had given a utopian example of a prosperous society based on a cooperative system and the equal distribution of wealth. In 1879 Henry George published a powerful book, Progress and Poverty, in which he pointed out, among others, the contradictions existing in America -a country with huge wealth yet where poverty was the rule rather than the exception. Henry George had also developed his single tax theory which would relieve the farmers from their increasing burdens. The end of the nineteenth century was also an era of political turmoil in America. The rise of centralizing capitalism was increasingly opposed by the emergence of radical movements and organized labour which sought to defend the farmers and workers, and indeed the interests of the lower classes. Some of the young writers and intellectuals who became prominent figures at the beginning of the twentieth century associated themselves with the radical and reform groups and voiced their sympathies with the poor. Jack London, Lincoln Steffens, Emma Goldman, and Upton Sinclair were notable examples. No record, however, suggests that Dreiser undertook similar actions or raised his voice in protest.

Nonetheless, it is wrong to suggest that the events of the 1880s and 1890s had no effect on Dreiser, and that he remained completely indifferent to what was happening in his country. If Dreiser failed to adopt a political position towards the events which occurred in America at

the close of the nineteenth century, it was because he responded to these events in another way. Dreiser, like many other people, felt the discrepancies between the rich and the poor in the American society. Although he did not grasp the importance of some of the major occurrences in America, Dreiser did not fail to notice the rapid transformations that his country was undergoing, and that in most cases these changes had created a chaotic situation. The truth is that he caught the spirit characterising this period of American history in his novels as perhaps no other American writer ever did. However, Dreiser's ardent cultivation of pessimistic determinism as a philosophy of life in the early years of his literary career prevented him from becoming interested in the political affairs of his country, and even led him to exclude any political action as a means to improve the situation in the American society.

Unlike Dreiser, Upton Sinclair became immersed in politics in his early twenties. The conditions which failed to awake Dreiser's political awareness had a positive effect in this sense on Sinclair. However, it was mainly the discovery of socialism which caught Sinclair's mind and turned him into a fierce political activist. As Sinclair himself reported in An American Outpost (1932) and his autobiographical novel, Love's Pilgrimage (1911), his encounter with socialism occurred in 1902 when he accidentally attended a socialist gathering.

Like his hero Jurgis in The Jungle, the successive speeches that he heard overwhelmed him; as he put it, "It was like the falling down of prison walls about my mind ..."⁵¹ Sinclair furthered his initiation into the doctrine of socialism by reading pamphlets by George D. Herron, a former congregational clergyman and ardent socialist, who later helped him financially and became his protector. Socialism as Sinclair conceived it, did not involve a revolutionary transformation of the existing structures; it might be just termed 'Humanitarian Socialism'. What he asked for through the preaching of this doctrine was an end to people's exploitation and an improvement of their socio-economic conditions. But he insisted that this could only be achieved (as is shown in the last chapter of The Jungle) through an equal distribution of wealth and an economic system based on collectivism. Sinclair's socialism has also a religious character. A French critic has indeed suggested that the reasons behind Sinclair's adherence to socialism were not so much political as moral and religious.⁵² Sinclair was very much influenced by puritanism and he certainly applied some of its principles to plead for justice and the brotherhood of man. He called Jesus the first socialist, and a part of the socialism he advocated was "but the literal application of the teachings of Christ."⁵³

Since he joined the socialist party Sinclair never ceased to be an active member. He undertook many investigations for the party and the socialist newspapers in order to inform the American people about the way of life of the poor and provoke certain reforms. The most notable example was naturally the investigation of the Chicago stockyards which gave birth to The Jungle. In November 1906 Sinclair put his socialist beliefs once again in practice when he invested the \$30,000 the success of The Jungle brought him in the creation of a cooperative colony in New Jersey. The experiment at Helicon Hall (the name of the colony) had a wide publicity and attracted all kinds of people; even Sinclair Lewis, then a Harvard student, joined the colony. However, after a few months, in March 1907, Sinclair's dreams came to an end when a fire suddenly destroyed his utopian world.⁵⁴ In spite of this incident Sinclair's struggle for the advancement of the socialist cause did not weaken. His attacks on capitalism, and his belief that socialism was the only solution for the poor socio-economic conditions existing in America, were strongly stated in his subsequent novels. It was also Sinclair who brought the consequences of the Ludlow massacre to public attention by picketing Rockefeller's offices in New York, and by investigating the working and living conditions of the miners in the Colorado coal fields. In California, well before his famous E.P.I.C campaign, Upton Sinclair had already devoted his time and

money in order to run for various elections to public offices. Sinclair's political activities were numerous and would be too long to list here. Even after he left the socialist party in July 1917 Sinclair did not stop fighting for humanitarian causes.

It is only after Sinclair had an established reputation as a 'muckraker' and had become a prominent figure in the socialist party that Dreiser started to manifest a certain political interest, or at least denounce in his writings the vices of America. Dreiser began to contribute articles in some of the socialist papers, such as The Call, where he denounced the daily abuses practiced in American society, and questioned American ideals. In his analysis of Dreiser's political evolution, Richard Lehan referred to two of these articles. The following lines are from Dreiser's essay, 'More Democracy or less? An Inquiry?' (1919).

In my personal judgement ...
America as yet certainly is
neither a social nor a
democratic success. Its
original democratic theory does
not work, or has not, and a
trust - and a law - frightened
people to say nothing of a
cowardly or suborned, and in
any case helpless, press, prove
it ... I should really like to
know on what authority we base
our plea for the transcendent
merits of democracy, and I am a
democrat as most Americans if
not more so.⁵⁵

Such an overt and an unambiguous criticism recalls some of Sinclair's strongest attacks on capitalism. In the other article he contributed to The Call, Dreiser denounced the vices existing in the cities, and especially corruption.⁵⁶ Dreiser felt indignant in face of the favours granted by local authorities to the big businessmen in order to control public utilities. When World War I broke out Dreiser adopted a political stand by denouncing it and opposing American intervention. This, however, may be more the result of Dreiser's pro-German feelings than his political beliefs. Dreiser's position towards the first World War brought him close to some of the socialists who had themselves condemned it, since, as they argued, its aim was only the protection of the capitalists' interests. Oddly enough, unlike Dreiser, Sinclair came in favour of American intervention because he maintained that Germany was a threat to the expansion of the socialist ideals. It was mainly his pro-war attitude which had caused Sinclair's split with the socialist party.

Although in this period Dreiser became politically conscious, it is difficult to state precisely his political leanings. Dreiser remained a strong individualist and had a long way to go before he showed a clear political commitment. In 1925 Dreiser published An American Tragedy in which he showed that the Horatio Alger myth was no longer valid. The novel received wide acclaim for its acute and serious analysis of American society, and

established Dreiser's reputation as the leading American writer. In 1928 An American Tragedy became the American novel most published in the U.S.S.R. and was very popular among intellectuals as well as workers.

It seems that the successful reception of An American Tragedy in the U.S.S.R. was at the origin of the Soviets' invitation to Dreiser to visit their country. Dreiser's trip to Russia in 1928 was regarded by critics like F.O. Matthiessen and Richard Lehan as an important landmark in the writer's increasing involvement in politics and his slow conversion to communism.⁵⁷ Although it was characterised by some reservations, Dreiser's account of his experiences in Russia shows that he was indeed impressed by many of the achievements of the soviet regime. It must be noted that amid the publicity which surrounded the trip of America's leading writer to Russia and some of the suggestions made about his affinities with communism, Dreiser denied that his visit had a political character. Moreover he defended himself, as he was to do many times, against having any link with communism.

One of the most important things that Dreiser told reporters when he came back from Russia was that in this country there were no breadlines and unemployment.⁵⁸ Dreiser was highly impressed because these sights were frequent in a depression America. Dreiser was similarly fascinated by the enormous housing programmes and the quick emergence of schools, hospitals, and factories. During

his stay in the Soviet Union Dreiser had visited many of these factories and talked to workers. In his account Dreiser also mentioned some of the problems existing in Soviet Russia. He deplored, for instance, the lack of sanitary conditions and the indifference towards the thousands of homeless and bitterly bare children. Moreover he suggested that there is a class of Russians who in spite of their material poverty, enjoyed a high position and were powerful. But on the whole Dreiser had favourable opinions about the Russian system. He wrote that the great achievements of the Russians were not a theory but a fact and that the soviet system would be a success. He also believed that such a system would spread to the United States.⁵⁹

Since the publication of An American Tragedy and his trip to Russia Dreiser put his fiction aside in order to devote himself to the defense of humanitarian causes. It was only towards the end of his life that he resumed his creative activity and wrote The Bulwark (1946) and The Stoic (1947).⁶⁰ In between Dreiser was politically active and wrote many socio-political tracts.⁶¹ He became the chairman of the National Committee for the Protection of Political Prisoners, and in his capacity as chairman he conducted investigations in the case of 'the Scottsboro boys', accused of political terrorism, and in the strikes in the Harlan County coal fields. In June 1931 he went to Pittsburgh to investigate the working and living conditions

of the striking miners. When Sinclair started his E.P.I.C campaign in 1934, Dreiser was delighted with his initiative. He encouraged him a great deal and sent cheques to finance his campaign. Dreiser continued his conversion to the left and to communism when in 1938 he attended in Paris the 'rassemblement universel pour la paix', and went to Spain to see people fighting for the loyalist cause.⁶² Dreiser's activities brought him in contact with many prominent personalities from socialist and communist groups.

In spite of his political activities and his becoming an official member of the American Communist Party, Dreiser could never overcome certain contradictions which left doubts about his political commitment. For example, Dreiser was very active in furthering the communist causes, but he always defended himself against being one. Moreover, although he had sympathies for the communists and repeated time and time again that communism was the only solution to the abuses of American capitalism, he did not join the party until towards the end of his life. Dreiser often criticised the controversies which characterised the American Communist movement in the 1930s and the existence of rival groups inside it. He deplored their failure to adopt united policies in order to fight the socio-economic problems proper to America. During the years of political involvement and while he denounced the wide discrepancies between rich and poor, Dreiser himself led a comfortable

and luxurious way of life thanks to his literary success. He owned a house in New York (in 57th Street) and a rural residence in Mt Kisco, and, very often, he drew the attention of bystanders in Broadway by displaying the marks of his material wealth.⁶³ As a matter of fact Dreiser's 'spirit of giving' was questioned when a Kentucky newspaper editor asked him if he gave some of the \$35,000 he earned each year to charity, he answered, "No".⁶⁴ In his essay, 'Dreiser on Society and Literature' (1978), Thomas P. Riggio has also stressed Dreiser's political limitations. As he put it, "Yet even with his move to the left in the depression years, Dreiser became neither a narrow ideologue nor an anti-capitalist."⁶⁵ This explains to some extent why Dreiser was never urged by the communists to join their party in spite of the wide publicity that his international reputation would make them. As Richard Lehan has suggested, Earl Browder the then head of the American Communist Party was never enthusiastic about Dreiser's joining the party because he was "suspect of Dreiser's independent and unpredictable views."⁶⁶ It was not until 1945 when William Z. Foster, a friend of Dreiser's, succeeded Earl Browder that his application was accepted and Dreiser was welcomed to the party.

Sinclair's political commitment was immune from the many obvious contradictions that characterised Dreiser's political career. Sinclair proved more than once his attachment to his ideals and was very often at the avant

-garde of the struggle for equality and social justice. Yet Sinclair's political beliefs, and especially the kind of socialism he advocated, were sometimes found fault with and strongly criticised. One of the most significant criticisms made about Sinclair's political career came from Lenin who referred to the writer as "an emotional socialist without theoretical grounding."⁶⁷ Lenin's statement contains a large part of truth. Sinclair's feelings rather than his political beliefs had indeed led him to undertake many of the activities that made his reputation as a social reformer. Most of his novels are also dominated by his sympathetic feelings towards the deprived classes which constitute his fictional world. Moreover Sinclair's anti-capitalist attitude is to a great extent grounded in his personal sufferings. As he himself suggested, some of the misfortunes that befell the Lithuanian family in The Jungle are an account of his own family's hardships. In his article, Sender Garlin called Sinclair 'A Reactionary Utopian'.⁶⁸ Garlin strongly criticised Sinclair's 'naive' suggestion that the socio-economic changes he advocated could occur without any turmoil, and that "the ruling class might be willing to make the great surrender ...". Sinclair's statement, as S. Garlin has pointed out, can but show his weak understanding of Marx's theories, especially that "force is the midwife of history" and that "no ruling class has ever relinquished power without struggle."⁶⁹ The critic's attack on Sinclair also stems from the fact that

Sinclair 'betrayed' his socialist ideals (for the second time) when he decided to run on the democratic ticket for governor of California. As for Sinclair's Epic programme, Garlin suggested that it was unrealistic and very weak. According to him, many of the points in Sinclair's programme were made without taking into consideration the economic situation of the country, or the negative consequences which the application of his propositions might have. For example, as Garlin wrote, in his desire "to place a million or so unemployed" Sinclair overlooked "the conditions of the millions who are still slaving in the mills, factories, on the docks - and neon plantations through the state."⁷⁰ Sinclair had been also criticised for his 'unsettled' political mind. "Like Stalin and Roosevelt", one critic wrote, "he can change with changing conditions." As he also suggested it was because he did not have fixed opinions that, "Sinclair has been repudiated by the Communists and the hard shelled marxists."⁷¹

If there is a general agreement today between those scholars who have dealt with the subject of immigration to the United States, it concerns, undoubtedly, an increasing sense of the importance of the immigrant's role in the shaping of modern America. For one thing the great movements from Europe to America constituted, in the subtitle of Oscar Handlin's book, The Epic Story of the Migrations that Made the American People.¹ The sense of the "immigrant" was perhaps first given by Crèvecoeur when he wrote in his essay, "What is an American?":

The next wish ... will be to know whence came all these people. They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race now called Americans have arisen.²

The arrival en masse of immigrants to the United States during the second half of the 19th century helped to exploit the vast resources of the country and improve American economic conditions. How important their participation in the economic development of America was is best reflected in M.A. Jones's words,

Yet in the broad view the economic effects of mass immigration were undeniably beneficial. As well as contributing to the fluidity of the American economy, it hastened the construction of transportation network and accelerated the growth of industrialism. Neither the factory system nor the great

canal and railroad developments of the period could have come into existence so quickly without the reservoir of cheap labour provided by immigration.³

The effects were therefore extensive. It is not surprising that the writers have responded to the phenomenon. In his book, The City, the Immigrant and American Fiction, 1880-1920,⁴ for instance, David M. Fine analysed how writers came to represent the European immigrant in their works, especially the working and living conditions and the kind of social status he enjoyed in American society. However Fine's study is limited for two reasons. First, among the minority groups he studied, he concentrated mainly on the East-European Jews, neglecting thus, or saying very little about other minorities, such as the Irish, Germans and Italians, who also left their mark on American life, and who are represented in the works of a number of writers. Second, since his analysis was restricted on the whole to the East-European Jews, this meant he was obliged to concentrate on less-known writers. It is true that he refers in his work to such novelists as William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane, and Upton Sinclair, but he gives a very brief analysis of their novels. In the case of the latter, for instance, he limits himself to The Jungle (1906) and points out only the hardships which befell the Lithuanian family in the stockyards of Chicago. Since Upton Sinclair who will be dealt with here gave much attention in some of his other novels such as King Coal

(1917) and Boston (1928) to minority groups living in America, it is certainly a good opportunity to expand what Fine has begun and give a more detailed analysis of Upton Sinclair's treatment of the European immigrant. Furthermore this study will give a broader view of the immigrant in American fiction, since in addition to Upton Sinclair I shall also be dealing with Theodore Dreiser. Dreiser's novels give a minute description of many aspects of American society including that of the immigrant world. The predominance of German characters in his famous novels, Jennie Gerhardt (1911) and An American Tragedy (1925) is one example.

On the other hand, to analyse how the immigrant character came to be represented in the works of Dreiser and Sinclair is of importance not only because these two writers enjoy a high reputation in the literary history of America, but also because most of their novels which deal with the fate of immigrants were produced about the same period and at a time (1900-1920) when the debate about immigration reached its climax. Moreover it is interesting to compare how Sinclair, the socialist reformer, and Dreiser, whose novels are immune from the propaganda which characterises Sinclair's work but who gave nevertheless a merciless account of America, reacted to the immigration problem and represented it in their fiction. First it is necessary to give some idea of the historical context.

The year 1882 is an important date in the history of American immigration. According to the Dillingham Commission set up in order to investigate the immigration question, 1882 marks the shift in the geographical origins of the immigration to the United States and the division between what came to be termed as "old" and "new" immigration. This conclusion of the Dillingham Commission created an immediate controversy. Some historians have stated that the findings of this commission were correct and came to speak increasingly about a sudden shift in the type of immigration to America at the beginning of the 1880s. Others have instead rejected them as misleading. This is the case, among others, of Maldwin Jones who argues in his book, American Immigration (1960) that the conclusions of the Dillingham Commission were inadequate, since in the 1880s "old" immigrants, that is those from North-West Europe, continued to arrive in a great number to the United States, and that it was not until the end of the century that the "new" immigration (South-East Europe) became important. Moreover, contrary to what has been suggested, the shift from old to new immigration came according to him "with less suddenness ... and the disparity between the two groups became really marked only after the turn of the century."⁵ However, in spite of this controversy both sides agree that 1882 marks the beginning of a great wave of immigration toward the New World and the emergence of new kinds of immigrants. Hence

the number of immigrants which for example between 1830 and 1840 was only 599,000, in the single year of 1882 reached 788,000; 82 per cent of whom came from North-West Europe and 13 per cent from South-East Europe. In 1907 when the Dillingham Commission started its investigation 1,285,000 immigrants arrived in the United States with the figures from North and South Europe 19.3 and 80.7 per cent respectively.⁶

European immigrants came to America for numerous reasons and the causes reflect the conditions prevailing on either side of the Atlantic. However the main reasons for immigration given by historians can be roughly grouped into three categories; that is economic, political and religious. They can be briefly summed up as follows. In his book The Uprooted (1973) Oscar Handlin suggested that most of the European immigrants were peasants who were, to borrow his phrase, "Uprooted" from their villages as a result of their agricultural difficulties.⁷ To attribute the causes of American immigration to the difficulties of the European peasants is feasible enough. The mass of Irish immigrants which poured into the United States, for example, were mainly farmers who had to leave their lands because of the high rents, and other hard measures imposed by absentee English landlords. The potato famine of 1848-9 made the situation of Irish peasants even worse and hastened the departure of a great number of them. Another famine occurred in 1879 with the same results.

Agricultural difficulties were not, however, the only economic causes of immigration. The accelerating pace of the industrial revolution in the 1850s also had similar if not worse consequences. Most English immigrants left their country in order to escape the exploitation of the new business class, their bad working conditions, and to seek better prospects in the New World. As the Industrial Revolution spread to other European countries, it worsened the lot of many people and turned them to America.

As for other causes of immigration to the United States they are either political or religious. Many immigrants left the Old World because they suffered from political oppression. This was the case of those "forty eighters" who became undesirable after the failure of the 1848 revolution all over Europe and fled to the United States in order to escape severe persecutions. Similarly the "Iron and Blood" policy practiced by Otto Von Bismarck caused many German socialists to leave their country in the 1870s. As a result of the wave of anti-semitism which broke out in Czarist Russia in 1882, the Jews became the subject of both political and religious persecutions and had to flee to America.

On the other hand immigration to the United States was also hastened by the huge scale industrialisation of America. As the demands for labour power increased, those companies and railroad agencies which were directly involved in the industrialisation process launched several

advertising campaigns in Europe, and provided various facilities (reduced steamship fares and railroad tickets) in order to attract immigrants. They were helped in their task by the improvement of the means of transportation, especially the steamships which offered a better journey and diminished the risks of diseases during the trip.

As the increasing use of machines lowered the demand for high skills, many advertising campaigns were conducted in South-East Europe where cheap, semi-skilled, and unskilled, workers could be easily found. Hence from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards most immigration to the United States was from Austria-Hungary, Italy, Russia, Rumania, Greece and Turkey.⁸ However, unlike their predecessors from Northern and Western Europe who were on the whole well-accepted by established Americans, the new immigrants were not as acceptable. For one thing the easy access to the New World gave place to more controls at the American customs. Upon their arrival new immigrants were asked questions about their financial situation (lest they would become a public charge once in the United States) and about their health conditions, since these new immigrants came from the "filthy" places of Europe, and furthermore they were liable to catch diseases during their trip; about their political opinions, since the fear of European radicals and anarchists was at a high level at the beginning of the twentieth century. Needless

to say this questioning was further demoralising for the already worn-out immigrants whose language difficulties also added to their problems.

What was in store for the new immigrants once they entered the U.S.A. can be perceived through the brilliant and touching descriptions of the working and living conditions of minorities in Jacob Riis' book, How the Other Half Lives (1890). As Riis described it, the mass of immigrants lived, among others, in the tenements of the lower East-Side of New York, especially in such places as Mulberry Bend and Gotham Court which became famous for their hellish conditions. In the tenements of these areas several families with their children gathered together, and it was the rule rather than the exception for ten or twelve people to sleep together in small rooms. In one of his visits to the houses of immigrants Jacob Riis noticed that "In a room not thirteen feet either way slept twelve men and women, two or three in bunks set in a sort of alcove, the rest on the floor."⁹ Hygiene left a lot to be desired. Water, sewage system, and toilets were also lacking.

As for the conditions in which the immigrants worked they were no better. More often than not the urgent need for a job in order to exist impelled immigrants to accept any kind of work offered to them - a fact which led to their exploitation at the hands of rapacious American businessmen. What was even worse was that the work was usually done in dehumanising and unhealthy conditions,

especially in the sweatshops which were situated in underground cellars, from early morning till seven o'clock in the evening, six or seven days a week.

In addition to their poor conditions immigrants also suffered from nativist reactions.¹⁰ From the beginning of the 1880s onwards the great waves of immigrants which poured into the United States caused a certain restlessness among Americans who looked unfavourably at the flow of European immigrants into their country. They began urgent demands for restrictions; some of them became increasingly concerned about the immigration question, and warned against the dangerous consequences of the massive arrival of foreigners. This was mainly the case of such eminent personalities as Henry Cabot Lodge and Josiah Strong who denounced the degrading effects of unlimited immigration in their essays "The Restriction of Immigration" and "Our Country" respectively.¹¹ The demands for restriction engendered by the fear of the immigrant resulted after a long debate in two important laws to restrict immigration to the United States: the Literacy Test Act of 1921 and the Quota Law of 1924.

Such measures, to say the least, contradicted democratic principles dear to Americans. By closing its doors to the immigration from Europe, America proved it was no longer the land of freedom where the poor and the oppressed could find refuge. In addition these anti-immigrant policies and the lot reserved to the foreigners

in the New World seem to indicate the failure of the "Melting Pot" symbol. The image of the melting pot came to be used first in 1908 when a Jewish writer, Israel Zangwill, produced a play entitled The Melting Pot in New York. In it he conceived of America as a "pot" in which the mass of immigrants are mixed together and are changed through an assimilation process into Americans. His idea is best expressed in the conclusion of his main protagonist:

There she lies, the Great
Melting-pot--listen! Can't
you hear the roaring and the
bubbling? There gapes her
mouth--the harbour where a
thousand mammoth feeders come
from the ends of the world to
pour their human freight
Here shall they all unite to
build the Republic of Man and
the Kingdom of God.¹²

The idea of America as a melting pot was also expressed before Israel Zangwill used the metaphor as a title for his play. In his essay, "What is an American?" Crèvecoeur had written, "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men"¹³ while Ralph Waldo Emerson stated that the variety of immigrants would "construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature".¹⁴ However in the face of difficulties endured by immigrants in the New World the above statements proved premature and the melting pot symbol a dubious one.

To some extent, such failure was not only the result of a nativist attitude toward foreigners, but it also stemmed from the immigrant's reluctance to be assimilated and his desire to cling by all means to his own cultural background; a fact which led the members of each ethnic group to gather in particular places. The idea of making a national character out of the immigrant also had many opponents. The most notable was Randolph Bourne who, in an essay entitled "Trans-national America", criticised efforts to assimilate immigrants and to impose on them "Anglo-Saxon" ideals. Randolph Bourne advocated instead a pluralism of ethnic and national groups which could variously contribute to American culture. In fact "in a world which dreams of internationalism" America seemed to have realised this dream already. As he put it,

America is already the world-federation in miniature, the continent where for the first time in history has been achieved that miracle of hope, the peaceful living side by side, with character substantially preserved, of the most heterogeneous peoples under the sun.¹⁵

If the melting pot symbol was inadequate, the cosmopolitanism advocated by Randolph Bourne was a long way off as an ideal. Those who held to the ideology of the WASP (as was shown through the nativist attitudes) never accepted equality with the undesirable Europeans. As for "the peaceful living side by side" of the various ethnic groups,

this seems somehow a naive assumption given the rivalries between immigrants and natives, and among immigrants themselves.

This was briefly the situation prevailing at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, as far as immigration was concerned, and we may assume it had an effect on the work of two writers who were stimulated to depict the realities of their country and to treat and interpret them according to new currents of thoughts. Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair who appear as the best representatives of a literary tradition which began with such writers as Stephen Crane and Frank Norris, who had themselves denounced the evils of rising capitalism, were likely to have been attracted by an issue as important as immigration. Moreover there seems to be a variety of factors in the lives and careers of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair which might have brought about an interest in the immigrants.

To begin with, Theodore Dreiser himself had an immigrant background. His father John Paul was born in Mayen, Germany, and left his country in 1844 in order to escape conscription. Upon his arrival to the United States, he set out for the West to seek fortune, and after having undertaken several jobs he ended up as a weaver with his own mill. On his way West he met in Dayton, Ohio, a Moravian farmer girl, Sarah Mary Schanab whom he married in 1848.¹⁶ Dreiser's family lived in a serene prosperity

until the father's mill was destroyed by a fire. Consequently a series of hardships befell the family and Theodore Dreiser came to experience a poverty like the immigrant families he was to describe in his own novels. This situation was aggravated by the attitude of his father who retired in "a very superstitious and bigoted catholicism",¹⁷ and the eleven children (Theodore Dreiser was the ninth) who had to be taken care of.

Dreiser's experience in journalism also had an important impact. In 1884, Dreiser moved to Chicago which was then rapidly expanding. In 1892 he began his work as a journalist in the Chicago Globe which he left a few months later to take up a new job in the St Louis Globe-Democrat. During his newspaper years immigrants continued to pour into the United States in great numbers and were attracted by many developing centers such as Chicago. The rapid growth of this city's population (which Dreiser suggested in Sister Carrie (1900)) seems to be the result, among others, of mass immigration. It is not therefore surprising that Dreiser's new profession, which brought him into contact with many of the problems of his society and provided him with a variety of materials for his novels, should awaken his interest in the immigration question.

Unlike Dreiser's parents, Sinclair's were not immigrants. His "father was the youngest son of captain Arthur Sinclair, and was raised in Norfolk. His mother

was one of the Baltimore Hardens."¹⁸ The following are a few lines from his friend Albert Mordell's report about Sinclair's ancestors:

Commodore Arthur Sinclair, the great-grandfather of Upton, fought in the first American naval battle after the Revolution, he being a midshipman on the Constellation, when it fought the Insurgente, in 1798 ... He had three sons, Arthur, George T., and Dr. William B., all of whom became officers in the old navy and resigned in 1861 to join the confederacy. Arthur, who is Upton's grandfather, was with Perry in Japan in the early fifties.¹⁹

Yet in spite of this aristocratic background, so alien to the immigrant, Upton Sinclair dealt extensively with the subject of immigration in such novels as The Jungle, King Coal, and Boston. It must be remembered that although they have deeply rooted southern origins, the Sinclairs moved up North to New York in 1888 at the height of industrialisation, and when Upton was only ten years of age. Hence it may be argued that from that time until the publication of these novels Upton Sinclair had been able to experience the consequences of industrialism and the evil effects of rising capitalism which had undoubtedly a great influence on him, and affected his attitude towards his society.

Like Dreiser, Sinclair was a journalist, and his newspaper job brought him similarly face to face with many of the subjects he treated in his novels. The Jungle, to

give but an example, is a case in point. In 1904, Upton Sinclair was asked by the editor of the Appeal to Reason, a socialist magazine, to investigate the working conditions in the Chicago stockyards as a result of the "Great Beef Strike". It is during his sojourn in the meat-packing houses that Upton Sinclair came, among others, in contact with the mass of immigrants. As he put it in American Outpost (1932):

I sat at night in the homes of the workers, foreign-born and native, and they told me their stories, one after one, and I made notes of everything.²⁰

The acquaintance of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair with the immigration issue is easily traceable in some of their novels. In Jennie Gerhardt, Theodore Dreiser refers to the German origins of his characters and states the inner causes which led to Gerhardt's departure to the United States. As was the case with Dreiser's father, Gerhardt who "was born in the kingdom of Saxony",

... had character enough to oppose the army conscription iniquity, and to flee, in his eighteenth year, to Paris. From there he had set forth for America, the land of promise.²¹

On the other hand, Upton Sinclair's The Jungle is an important document about the whole question of immigration; it almost appears as an illustration of many of the facts described, for instance, by Oscar Handlin. By dealing with the causes of the Lithuanian family's departure, Upton

Sinclair tackles the problem of immigration from its origins. Like the mass of immigrants who went to the United States, the heroes of this novel decide to leave their country because their social and financial situation left a lot to be desired, "Now the farm had been sold, and the whole family was adrift - all they owned in the world being about seven hundred roubles, which is half as many dollars."²²

An analysis of the fictionalisation of Gerhardt's and the Lithuanian family's immigration to the United States reveals immediately one of the important features which characterises the naturalistic method, namely its determinism. Malcolm Cowley suggested in his essay, "A Natural History of American Naturalism" that

Naturalism has been defined in two words as pessimistic determinism ... The naturalistic writers were all determinists in that they believed in the omnipotence of abstract forces. They were pessimists so far as they believed that men and women were absolutely incapable of shaping their own destinies.²³

Although Gerhardt and Jurgis's family take themselves the decision to cross the Atlantic, this very decision is rather determined by a state of things which these people can not, apparently, do anything about. Gerhardt is confronted with the harshness of his country's institutions, especially the army conscription, and has to flee; while the Lithuanian family have to lead a hopeless

struggle with indifferent Nature. Political reality and a metaphysic of nature presented the same iron face. Dreiser's hero and the protagonists of The Jungle are also lured by the glittering and irresistible conditions on the other side of the Atlantic. Attractive news about the prosperity of the United States was rapidly reaching the old continent so that America appeared to many people (as the example of Gerhardt reflects) the "land of promise" where one could have a secure future. The news came through friends who had gone over, and become rich. There were also various American agencies which advertised in Europe the opportunities offered by the New World in order to attract the cheap labour power needed for the exploitation of the nation's resources. As in Upton Sinclair's novel:

... old man Durham himself was responsible for these immigrations ... he had sent his agents into every city and village in Europe to spread the tale of the chances of work and high wages at the stockyards.
(The Jungle, p.82)

The colourful prospects of the New World were indeed responsible for a large part of the migration from Europe to America, and shaped the destinies of many people. This migration was furthermore hastened by the image that immigrants conceived of America and the mysteries and myths which characterised the country. In some of their novels Dreiser and Sinclair gave insights into how America came to be perceived, and the importance it held in the eyes of

immigrants. Dreiser, for instance, (as was seen earlier) uses almost a biblical phrase, "the land of promise"; while Upton Sinclair writes that America offers huge opportunities which belong to the domain of the fairy tale.

America gained a special importance for immigrants because, unlike European countries, it appeared to enjoy democratic institutions, and was presented as the land of freedom where the poor and the oppressed could find refuge. It is mainly this image that Upton Sinclair's hero, Jurgis, got from the news about this country.

In that country, rich or poor, a man was free, it was said; he did not have to go into the army, he did not have to pay out his money to rascally officials - he might do as he pleased, and count himself as good as any other man. So America was a place of which lovers and young people dreamed. (The Jungle, p.29)

The young people and the unprivileged dreamed because America was not only the land of democratic institutions, but also a land of superior values. The most notable of these is reflected in the Horatio Alger myth (whereby the poor are supposed to succeed through hard work and perseverance) which had a great influence on American everyday life. Once in the United States many immigrants managed to get rich and rise in the world. Some of Dreiser's characters, especially Edward Malia Butler, an Irishman (The Financier (1912); The Titan (1914)),

illustrate the success of the Horatio Alger myth. The following lines show certain phases of Butler's prodigious career:

Edward Butler, then a poor young Irishman, had begun by collecting and hauling away the garbage free of charge, and feeding it to his pigs and cattle. Then a local political character, a councilman friend of his ... saw a new point in the whole thing. Butler could be made official garbage-collector. The council could vote an annual appropriation for this service. Butler could employ more wagons than he did now - dozens of them, scores. Not only that, but no other garbage-collector would be allowed. And since then times had been exceedingly good with Edward Butler.²⁴

Here the irony of monopoly undercuts the Alger myth. In The Financier and The Titan we can also perceive other successful characters like Edward Malia Butler. Roger O'Mara, for example, is "an Irish political lawyer", while John McKenty,

as a three-year-old child had been brought from Ireland by his emigrant parents during a period of famine ... Today, at forty-eight, McKenty was an exceedingly important personage.²⁵

In Jennie Gerhardt, Dreiser uses other Irish characters to illustrate the success of the Horatio Alger myth, namely the Kanes family. Archibald Kane, Lester's father, who started at the bottom of the social ladder had almost the same prodigious career as Edward Malia Butler.

Early in life he had realized that America was a growing country. There was going to be a big demand for vehicles - wagons, carriages, drays - and he knew that some one would have to supply them. Having founded a small wagon industry, he had built it up into a great business; he made good wagons, and he sold them at a good profit. (Jennie Gerhardt, p.145)

That Theodore Dreiser chooses Irish characters rather than Germans to whom he belonged to illustrate the Horatio Alger myth is quite appropriate. Irish immigrants were one of the minority groups who had come early to the United States. Upon their arrival to the New World they were not well received by Americans, and English immigrants, who looked down upon them. However, thanks to their hard work and judicious use of the opportunities existing in the United States many Irish immigrants had managed to overcome their difficulties and build huge fortunes. They had even become influential and had come to control various spheres of American life, especially in such big cities as Chicago, New York, and Boston. It is highly likely that Theodore Dreiser who acquired a deep knowledge of the two first cities, thanks to his newspaper career, had noticed the successful rise of the Irish immigrant. His (earlier) accounts emphasize indeed the social mobility of the Irish, and illustrate a fact which is often pointed out by the historians of American immigration, that the Irish unlike other immigrants (especially the Germans) were easily

assimilated in American society and became influential. It is clear from the above passages that Dreiser's attitude towards the successful Irish immigrant seems to be both one of sneaking admiration and bitterness. He admired Irish immigrants because they started at the bottom of the social ladder and were clever enough to make a good use of the available opportunities. There is a certain bitterness also in the fact that neither he, who dreaded poverty and dreamt of a luxurious life, nor his father, who came early to the United States, could achieve success. Although Dreiser points out the integrity and honesty of Lester's father, ("Old Archibald Kane, the father, had amassed a tremendous fortune, not by grabbing and browbeating and unfair methods, but by seeing a big need and filling it." (Jennie Gerhardt, p.145)) the tone which characterises his account of Edward Butler's rise suggests a denunciation of the means used. As appears from Dreiser's description Edward Malia Butler has not built his fortune and become a successful man through hard work only. His prodigious career seems to be also the result of corrupt practices. It is because Edward Malia Butler has a politically influential Irish friend that "he could be made official garbage-collector," and that he receives a financial help from the city council. The advantages that Butler gets through his Irish friend are much more important; as Theodore Dreiser emphasizes, "Not only that" but his protagonist is allowed to make a prosperous business too

because the council prevents other garbage-collectors. Dreiser's account is also interesting in the sense that it shows the influence of immigrant groups in certain spheres of American life, and how the members of the same ethnic group help each other in order to move socially upwards and ensure the mobility of the group in general.

As is the case with Dreiser's Irish characters many of the Irish protagonists described in Upton Sinclair's The Jungle, follow the same road to success and become important persons. A typical example is Mike Scully:

The ruler of the district was therefore the democratic boss - a little Irishman named Mike Scully. Scully held an important party office in the State, and bossed even the mayor of the city, it was said; it was his boast that he carried the stockyards in his pocket. He was an enormously rich man - he had a hand in all the big graft in the neighborhood. It was Scully, for instance, who owned that dump which Jurgis and Ona had seen the first day of their arrival. (The Jungle, p.113)

Like Dreiser's account about the career of Edward Malia Butler, Sinclair's description of Scully's rise is ambiguous. More than any other ethnic group the Irish have deeply marked American political life. As has been suggested,

One of the functions of the Irish race in America ... is to administer the affairs of American cities. ... indeed, as early as the 1880s, Irish mayors were being elected in

New York and Boston, and other cities where the Celts had thickly settled.²⁶

Perhaps the best example which illustrates the influential role of the Irish in American politics is the election of J.F.Kennedy to the American presidency at the beginning of the 1960s. That Irish immigrants became so powerful politically may be explained by the fact that they came to the United States in great numbers and gathered together in the big cities. Moreover, compared to other ethnic groups, they had few language problems and could understand better the functioning of American institutions, and adapt to them. Hence in many elections Irish candidates won their districts thanks to the dominant votes of their fellow countrymen. The second characteristic which emerges from Upton Sinclair's description of Scully's rise is the close link between politics and business, although this feature is not only specific to the immigration question, but also to the whole 1880s and 1890s.

If the Irish immigrant emerges on the whole as successful from the novels of Dreiser and Sinclair, and confirms the Horatio Alger myth, other immigrant characters on the contrary show the failure of this myth. A typical example is Upton Sinclair's hero, Jurgis, and his family in The Jungle. Lured by the colourful prospects advertised in the the New World, Jurgis sets out with his family for America "where he would ... marry and be a rich man in the bargain". (p.29) What happens to this Lithuanian family

upon their arrival in the United States illustrates the thesis that immigrants were often ill-treated. Thus as soon as they set foot in the United States Jurgis and his relatives who have not yet recovered from their uncomfortable trip are met by,

... an agent who helped them, but he proved a scoundrel, and got them into a trap with some officials, and cost them a good deal of their precious money, which they clung to with such horrible fear. This happened to them again in New York
(The Jungle, p.30)

In spite of this event the Lithuanian family's faith in the values and opportunities of America remains high. Since hard work was the key to success they are eager to do so; their strong willingness is summed up in the often repeated sentence of Jurgis, "I will work harder." As a matter of fact Sinclair's hero does work hard. He takes all sorts of jobs offered to him, and toils everyday from dawn to dusk in the dehumanising meat-packing houses, and finally the humiliating fertiliser mill. However, every time he is exploited and rejected so that all his efforts to improve his situation fail.

If Jurgis's failure to achieve success casts doubts on the Horatio Alger myth, it also shows the omnipotence of external forces and the helplessness of human beings in face of these forces. Pessimistic determinism which characterises naturalistic writers occupies a large place in this novel, at least as far as the conversion of Jurgis

to socialism. Up to that point Upton Sinclair gives us on the whole a description of a fierce struggle between his Lithuanian family and natural forces. Although Jurgis and his relatives work hard, they are shown as unable to climb the social ladder because they are always crushed by a series of misfortunes. As one critic put it, "Chaque épisode du roman est une rubrique incroyable mais vraie de la misère."²⁷ After every misfortune Jurgis and his family accept their fate, and never give up their efforts to improve their situation. They struggle instead with fierceness until the whole family which was strongly united back home in Lithuania is destroyed. In spite of their struggles they have to submit.

The naturalistic method as used by Upton Sinclair in this novel finds full expression in chapter 22 which may be called "Jurgis's return to Nature". In his essay "A Natural History of American Naturalism" Malcolm Cowley stated,

A favourable theme in naturalistic fiction is that of the beast within. As a result of some crisis ... the veneer of civilization drops or is stripped away and we are faced with "the primal instinct of the brute struggling for its life and the life of its young." ... When evolution is treated in their novels, it almost always takes the opposite form of devolution or degeneration. It is seldom that the hero evolves toward a superhuman nature ... instead he sinks backward toward the beasts.²⁸

These aspects, as Malcolm Cowley has suggested, are best illustrated in L'Assommoir and La Bête Humaine of Zola, and the novels of his American admirer, Frank Norris, especially Vandover and the Brute (1914), where Vandover "tears off his clothes, paddles up and down the room on his hands and feet and snarls like a dog".²⁹ Although Jurgis does not degenerate to Vandover's beastly state, there are instances (in chapter 22) where Upton Sinclair shows "the beast within" his hero. On his way to the countryside after his son's death Jurgis lost control of himself and was described in the following terms:

He walked and walked, seeing nothing, splashing through mud and water ... He started down the track, and when he was past the gate-keeper's shanty he sprang forward and swung on to one of the cars ... He was fighting for his life; he gnashed his teeth together in his desperation. (The Jungle, p.253)

However, in one of his references to Jurgis's degeneration, Upton Sinclair becomes more explicit and lays bare the beastly instincts of his hero. In the manner of Zola he states,

... out of the rear part of the saloon a girl's face, red-cheeked and merry smiled at Jurgis ... He nodded to her, and she came and sat by him, and they had more drink, and then he went upstairs into a room with her, and the wild beast rose up within him and screamed, as it has screamed in the jungle from the dawn of time. (The Jungle, p.262)

Chapter 22 of The Jungle is also important because some of its passages illustrate Jurgis's revolt against the natural forces which crush him and his family. A typical example is when Jurgis takes his revenge on Nature by destroying peach-trees. The passage is worth quoting since it shows Jurgis's state of mind and his desire to continue his struggle.

... as he passed round the barn he came to a freshly plowed and harrowed field, in which the farmer had set out young peach trees; and as he walked he jerked up a row of them by the roots, more than a hundred trees in all, before he reached the end of the field. That was his answer, and it showed his mood; from now on he was fighting ... (The Jungle, p.257)

In addition to the influence of natural forces, the naturalistic method also emphasizes the influences of the environment on people's behaviour and their destinies. It is true that Jurgis and his family fall victim of the forces which dragged them down, but their misfortunes are also due, to a large extent, to the ruthless environment in which they happen to be. To give but one example, Jurgis's wife, Ona, falls victim of her boss who threatens to turn her and her relatives out of work if she will not yield to his desires. This event has perhaps, more than any other, disastrous consequences on the future of the Lithuanian immigrants, since it really marks the beginning of the family's destruction. In order to avenge Ona,

Jurgis attacks her seducer and is thus not only turned out of work, but also sent to jail. Deprived of its main support the Lithuanian family drifts gradually into deeper poverty.

"The return to Nature" may be also interpreted as Jurgis's escape from the oppressing forces characterising the environment in which he lived. It is only when he goes to the countryside that Jurgis rids himself of the social restraints and feels that "he was going to live". Upton Sinclair's description of him shows that he enjoys a greater freedom and does as he pleases; even his difficulties seem to have come to an end. Jurgis's harmony with his new environment also suggests a contrast between city and countryside, and the superiority of the latter. Here Sinclair takes up again one of the most important themes in American literature, that is, "the lost pastoral ideal" or to borrow Leo Marx's words, "The Machine in the Garden."³⁰ This episode in The Jungle which occurs half-way through and just after Jurgis's misfortunes reach their climax, epitomises in a way Upton Sinclair's attack on the catastrophic consequences of industrialisation and his denunciation of the meaninglessness of urban life.

On the other hand "Jurgis's return to Nature" may also suggest a contrast between America and the old continent, or a contrast between the situation of immigrants in the New World and their situation in their home countries. The following lines from chapter 22, when

used in a figurative sense, show indeed this contrast and the influence of the American environment in shaping immigrants' destinies.

When Jurgis had first come to the stockyards he had been as clean as any working-man could well be. But later on ... with hunger and discouragement, and the filthiness of his work, and the vermin in his home, he had given up washing in winter, and in summer only as much of him as would go into a basin.
(The Jungle, p.256)

Once in the countryside where "the water was free" Jurgis's first thought is "to get into it - all the way into it! It would be the first time that he had been all the way into the water since he left Lithuania!" (p.256) It is obvious from these lines that Sinclair portrays Jurgis ironically as better off in his Lithuanian village than in the New World. In spite of its huge opportunities America proved more often than not a great deception for the hopeful mass of immigrants. As Jurgis's example illustrates, a great number of the foreigners who came to America in order to seek wealth became speedily disillusioned and their dreams turned into nightmares. The conditions prevailing in the United States were very often worse than those existing in Europe.

In his novels, Sinclair gives an extensive depiction of these conditions, especially the working and living conditions. As is shown by his descriptions, the industrial companies which attracted immigrant workers

usually provided them with their own houses, but this is only, as Sinclair reveals, to tighten their grip on them and exploit them even more. In King Coal, North Valley camp where the coal-miners live is entirely owned by the G.F.C. (General Fuel Company). Houses, schools, shops and saloons are also an indivisible part of this company; even the church and the clergyman belong to "the general fuel company denomination". Hence from fear of losing their jobs and being turned out of their homes, the immigrants have to accept their bosses' terms to trade in the company-owned shops, and pay high rents for their houses. The latter, as Upton Sinclair depicts them, leave a lot to be desired:

These homes were beneath the dignity of chicken-houses, yet in some of them a dozen people were crowded, men and women sleeping on old rags and blankets on a cinder floor.³¹

The living conditions in the Chicago stockyards, as they came to be depicted in The Jungle, are similar to if not worse than those in North Valley camp. The following description gives an idea of the boarding-house where Jurgis and his family stay upon their arrival in the United States:

There would be an average of half a dozen boarders to each room -sometimes there were thirteen or fourteen to one room, fifty or sixty to a flat. Each one of the occupants furnished his own accommodations -that is a mattress and some bedding ... It was by no means unusual for two men to

own the same mattress in common, one working by day and using it by night, and the other at night and using it in the day-time. (The Jungle, p.34)

When their financial situation improved, Jurgis and his relatives managed "to buy" their own house. However, if this supposedly new house improved the Lithuanian family's living conditions, it proved in the long run a source of problems. Not only does the family spend all their savings to buy a house which (as grandmother Mazurkienne reveals to the great surprise and distress of Jurgis and his family) proves an old house that had already been occupied by several immigrant families, but when they fail to complete the rent payment in due time, they are thrown out in the streets by the stockyards bosses. This event results in the same situation which the family experiences in the boarding-house during their first days in the United States. When they lose the house they go back again to join a group of people in one of their immigrant acquaintance's shanty.

If the immigrants' living conditions were dealt with extensively in Upton Sinclair's novels (i.e. in The Jungle and King Coal), in Dreiser's novels they are almost neglected, or at least not treated with the same depth. It is true that in Jennie Gerhardt and An American Tragedy, Theodore Dreiser gives a detailed description of the poverty characterising the Gerhardts and the Griffiths, and their rudimentary means of subsistence, but, unlike Upton

Sinclair, Dreiser does not describe their housing conditions nor does he depict their poverty-stricken environment; the slums and shanty towns where the poor immigrants (to whom his characters belong) lived. The same comment may be said of the description of the immigrants' working conditions. It is more detailed in Sinclair's novels than in the novels of Dreiser. The working conditions in which Jurgis, his relatives, and their fellow workers laboured are too well known to be repeated here. Suffice it to say that if The Jungle is regarded today as the most important novel of Upton Sinclair, it is, among other things, because of its long descriptions of the filthy and dehumanising conditions in the Chicago stockyards. The working conditions described in King Coal are no better. The miners of North Valley can see the daylight only on Sundays because they work six days a week from dawn to dusk down in the mines. The mine workers are, more often than not, robbed of the fruit of their labour because the company's check-weighman does not really weigh the cars loading, but "just ran them quickly over the scales, and had orders not to go above a certain average".³² Because of the lack of safety measures the workers of North Valley were also an easy prey to dangerous accidents. An illustrative instance is when several of these men are killed or injured in the mine explosion.

The immigrants' precarious living and working conditions thus described, altered the image of America as a land of wealth and freedom. Instead of a unified prosperous society as it wanted itself to be, America became rather a country with "two nations" or "two halves" each of which had its own way of life and cultural values.

The problem of the immigrants' assimilation also finds an important place in the novels of Upton Sinclair. Jurgis and his family once again illustrate this fact. However, more than the story of this Lithuanian family the dramatic ending of Sacco and Vanzetti in Boston (1928) is a significant example of the nativist reactions to immigrants and of the opposition to their assimilation. Boston is more illustrative since it was based on, and reproduces, to some extent, the facts of an authentic event. Moreover when Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested and tried (in the 1920s) the debate about the immigration question, especially the demands for restriction, reached a crucial phase. As Sinclair suggests in Boston, the reaction of American natives to immigrants is sometimes the result of a difference in principles and political ideas. The mass of immigrants were often regarded as dangerous because they were believed to be radicals who brought over with them left wing ideas which constituted a threat to American values. As was the case with the Chicago martyrs in 1886, Sacco and Vanzetti were executed because they came from Europe (Italy more precisely) with anarchistic ideas, and

were considered to be a threat to the established order in America. Sinclair's hero, Vanzetti, also emphasizes this fact during his trial.

I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical, I have suffered because I was an Italian and indeed I am an Italian.³³

The socio-political gap which separated native Americans and the majority of immigrants widened even more when it came to religion and cultural values in general. This was often the result of both groups' resistance to each other. Through their segregating practices native Americans tried to keep the foreign-born in his class, and prevented him from crossing the barriers of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant milieu. Catholic immigrants, mainly, like the European radicals, were feared because they were thought a threat to the protestant ethic. Immigrants themselves showed a certain resistance to assimilation by refusing to adopt the customs and the way of life of the New World. Dreiser's character William Gerhardt illustrates this point. In his review of Jennie Gerhardt one critic wrote, "Jennie's father is a poor, disabled, aggressively religious, unassimilated immigrant." As if fearing the influence of the American environment, Gerhardt clings fiercely to his own traditions and his religiously dominated way of life. As Dreiser states,

His Lutheran proclivities had been strengthened by years of church-going and the religious observances of home life ... And so his household became a

God-fearing one; wherever they went their first public step was to ally themselves with the local Lutheran church, and the minister was always a welcome guest in the Gerhardt home. (Jennie Gerhardt, p.55)

Similarly the Christmas celebration in Jennie Gerhardt and the description of the "Veselija" in The Jungle illustrate the clash between immigrant and American values. Moreover, through the description of these events, and especially by pointing out the poverty of their characters, Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair show to what extent the American environment influenced the way of life of the immigrants and affected their customs. Hence the Christmas celebration is so deeply rooted in the Gerhardt family that sometimes because of their financial difficulties they feel a certain uneasiness at the thought of a failure to do the proper thing.

It was at the opening of the joyous Christmas-time that the bitterness of their poverty affected them most. The Germans love to make a great display at Christmas. It is the one season of the year when the fullness of their large family affection manifests itself ... Father Gerhardt at his saw-buck during the weeks before Christmas thought of this very often. (Jennie Gerhardt, p.25)

The opening chapter of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle also offers a good example of the immigrants' desire to preserve their cultural values once in the United States. In spite of their poverty Jurgis and Ona wed according to

their Lithuanian customs and have their "Veseliija", even if the family had to use all its savings and be over two or three hundred dollars in debt. The "Veseliija" has to be held because it is a sacred occasion, the essence of these people, and it is "so beautiful".

Bit by bit these poor people have given up everything else; but to this they cling with all the power of their souls - they cannot give up the "veseliija!" To do that would mean, not merely to be defeated, but to acknowledge defeat - and the difference between these two things is what keeps the world going. The "veseliija" has come down to them from a far-off time; ... (The Jungle, p.18)

Upton Sinclair's detailed description of the "veseliija" and the exact rendering of the atmosphere characterising it emphasizes the traditional aspect of the wedding ceremony. All the guests in this ceremony are foreigners, either Lithuanians or Poles. This stresses again another fact about American immigration, namely that immigrants tend to gather together once in the United States rather than mingle with the native population. Jurgis Rudkus has been in the United States for a year when he gets married, yet for all this time he remains an alien. Since the guests were all immigrants, this is another incentive for Jurgis' family to organise a traditional feast. The task of organising this feast rests upon Marija, Ona's cousin, who has "to see that all things went in due form, and after the best home traditions". (p.5) The "veseliija" as Sinclair

depicts it also reveals one of the characteristics of these immigrants: their generosity. In spite of their poverty they provided their guests with everything in order to satisfy them; perhaps a failure to do so would mean an offence against their pride or an attempt to depart from their own cultural values. The guests cannot but enjoy themselves in the subsequent atmosphere with plenty of food and drink, and spend the whole night dancing to the fairy music of the orchestra. The latter, under the direction of his "genius" Tamoszius Kuzleika, was mainly composed of immigrants, especially hired to liven the party up with music and contribute to the traditional atmosphere of the ceremony. Everybody has his share in this wedding party; even the babies "of which there were present a number equal to the total possessed by all the guests invited" are not left out. Sinclair also describes them marching "about munching contentedly at meat-bones and bologna sausages". (p.7) The celebration will not have its full traditional character if it is not completed by its most important phase the "acziavimas", "a ceremony which once begun, will continue for three or four hours, and it involves one uninterrupted dance". (p.7) However if the "acziavimas" marks the happy ending of the beautiful "veselija", it turns out to be a nightmare and anticipated the hardships of the young couple and their relatives. The guests who are supposed, according to the tradition of this ceremony, to help the bride and bridegroom with their presents

(consisting very often of a financial support) are not so keen or forget, under the influence of their excessive drinking, to do so.

The assimilation problem of some of Dreiser's and Upton Sinclair's immigrant characters is also suggested through their speech. Language difficulties proved more often than not an obstacle for immigrants to achieve success and to mingle with native Americans. In The Financier, although the Irish Edward Malia Butler becomes a powerful businessman, his family cannot socially advance because (in addition to their ignorance of the social "étiquette") he and his wife speak with a pronounced accent. The Butler daughters who are eager to join high society are often disappointed by their parents.

"Children! Children! ... Youse mustn't quarrel now. Come now. Give your father the tomatoes." There was an Irish maid serving at table; but plates were passed from one to the other just the same ... Another offense to Aileen. "Mama, how often have I told you not to say 'youse'?" pleaded Norah, very much disheartened by her mother's grammatical errors. "You know you said you wouldn't."³⁵

Dreiser emphasises once again that old Gerhardt is unassimilated by showing his attachment to his native tongue. Most of Gerhardt's speech in Jennie Gerhardt, as Dreiser specifies, is delivered in German. The following is an example among others:

"What is it about Senator Brander coming out to call on Jennie?" he asked in German.
(Jennie Gerhardt, p.58)

Gerhardt does not only use German with his wife. To his children who have adopted the English language, he also speaks in German:

"What difference?" cried Gerhardt still talking in German, although Jennie answered in English. (p.60)

Even when Gerhardt makes the effort to speak in English his speech is often accompanied by "the German tendency to speak aloud". (p.58) Among his immigrant characters, old Gerhardt is the only one that Dreiser treats as such. With the other major immigrant protagonists such as Edward Malia Butler and the Kane family, Dreiser limits himself to the description of their immigrant origins and their socio-economic ascension. However in Jennie Gerhardt, not only does Dreiser refer to the immigrant background of his hero, but throughout this novel he simply treats him as 'the German'. Dreiser's detailed descriptions of his hero and the emphasis on his foreign features may well be due to the fact that Gerhardt is modelled on Dreiser's father, himself a German immigrant.

In Boston, since most of the immigrant characters are Italians, what Sinclair presents us with is a mixture of American and Italian. This is especially reflected in Vanzetti's speech. Towards the end of the novel, because of his long sojourn in the United States and his hard study

of this country's language, Vanzetti manages more or less to speak and write correctly. However in the major part of Boston his speech consists of what might be called 'Italianized American', or simply Italian. In addition Vanzetti's speech is characterised by the use of simple sentences with a juxtaposition of key words which express the meaning of the message. The following passage chosen at random gives an idea about Vanzetti's speech:

The controversy died out of the other's voice. "I know, signora! I say, be happy, I no t'ink war no more, no t'ink rivoluzione, politica laida! I go picka flower. Soocha sweet flower grow here - you know heem? Mayflower - it is not only ship, it is flower. I learn time of year, I looka for heem. I taka Fay, Trando, odder piccoli, go looka flower, getta moocha bigga-what you say-gobba-bunch. (Boston, p.58)

Upton Sinclair also used this technique of transcribing the language with other immigrant characters. An Irishwoman who is about to warn Cornelia, Sinclair's heroine, against the anarchists that are Vanzetti and his Italian friends, addresses her in the following terms:

I have been watchin' and tis evident yez are an American lady, and perhaps ye do, it might be good to give a bit of warnin. (Boston, p.55)

That Upton Sinclair often uses this method is undoubtedly prompted by his desire to give a full and accurate description of the immigrant world and to

emphasize its opposition to that of the natives. The use of aristocratic characters (especially Cornelia in Boston and Hal Warner in King Coal) with immigrants in the same novels is a significant example of Sinclair's desire to show ironically the contrast between the two worlds.

Unlike their parents who found difficulties in adapting to the American way of life, the children of the immigrants were usually assimilated. As is reflected in Boston, Italian children (unlike Vanzetti) have no language problems; they even help in the "education" of their friend Vanzetti. As Sinclair shows, the influence of the American environment on the immigrants' children is such that Fay and her brother come to adopt American values.

She (Fay) was going to public school, as was her brother Beltrando, and it was curious how completely Americanized they were, with the quiet reserve of the New Englander and even the broad "a" and the murdered "r". (Boston, p.46)

The assimilation of the immigrants' children did not always occur without difficulties; more often than not it clashed with the deeply rooted traditions of the parents. William Gerhardt who is a "bigoted" Lutheran does his best to inculcate his inherited traditions to his children and bring them up according to strict religious principles, "... such a deep religious feeling made him stern with his children." (p.56) However if Gerhardt clings to his cultural values and manages to resist assimilation, he

fails to do the same for his children who are caught in the Americanization process and begin to adopt the American way of life. Hence Bass the eldest child,

Though only a car-builder's apprentice, without any education except such as pertained to Lutheran doctrine, to which he objected very strongly, he was imbued with American color and energy.
(Jennie Gerhardt, p.10)

In dealing with the treatment of the immigrant in the novels of Dreiser and Sinclair, a question arises, among others, about the objectivity or the sincerity of these two writers' approach. Objectivity and sincerity are very controversial terms, and they become even more so when they are applied to naturalist-realist writers. The controversy is largely dealt with by George Becker in his essay, "Realism: An Essay in Definition". Briefly speaking George Becker suggests that by being objective the author,

... wishes to place as little of a barrier as possible between the reader and the experience set down in words ... The writer takes great pains not to allow any personal prejudice or predilection to divert him from presenting things as they are.³⁶

George Becker also acknowledges that the maintenance of objectivity is almost impossible since the writer runs the risk of "manipulating his data to strengthen them, to simplify them, or, especially to heighten them as a literature".³⁷ The manipulation of data, especially when the writer commits himself to a social cause is such that

objectivity becomes seriously compromised. Two typical examples "of a method gone wrong" according to George Becker are Mc Teague (1899) and The Jungle. The latter has also been criticised by Arthur H. Quinn (a strong opponent of Upton Sinclair whom he dismisses as a novelist) for the same reasons; that is its lack of objectivity:

The weaknesses ... are utter lack of probability of all the ills happening to one person or to one family ... When a novelist piles on the misery too much one ceases to believe in it; ...³⁸

To what extent George Becker's and A.H.Quinn's statements about The Jungle (and other novels) are true can be briefly discussed. In order to write the novels dealt with here, Upton Sinclair relied heavily, like Dreiser and other naturalists, on documentation. The filthy conditions in the stockyards described by Upton Sinclair were verified by the commission appointed by Theodore Roosevelt in order to investigate these conditions. It was as a result of this investigation that a series of food laws were issued. The living and working conditions of the immigrants depicted in this novel were also frequently denounced by other muckrakers to whom Upton Sinclair belonged. The following passages from The Jungle and Jacob Riis's How the Other Half Lives respectively, give a description of the tenements where immigrants usually lived:

Poni Aniele (Jurgis' landlady) had a four room flat in one of that wilderness of two story-

frame tenements that lie 'back of the yards'. There were four such flats in each building, and each of the four was a 'boarding house' for the occupancy of foreigners ... Her home was unthinkably filthy. (The Jungle, p.34)

It is generally a brick building from four to six stories high on the street ... four families occupy each floor, and a set of rooms consists of one or two dark closets, used as bedrooms with a living room twelve feet by ten ... a midnight inspection unearths a hundred and fifty "lodgers" sleeping on filthy floors in two buildings.³⁹

Yet other aspects in The Jungle reveal where the realistic method has gone wrong. Although The Jungle denounces the filthy conditions prevailing in the stockyards, and relates the misfortunes endured by a Lithuanian family, this novel is at bottom an account of the difficulties experienced by Upton Sinclair in his adolescent and married life. As Sinclair states in American Outpost,

Externally, the story had to do with a family of stockyards workers, but internally it was the story of my own family. Did I wish to know how the poor suffered in winter time in Chicago? I had only to recall the previous winter in the cabin, when we had only cotton blankets, and had put rugs on top of us, and cowered shivering in our separate beds ... Our little boy was down with pneumonia that winter, and nearly died, and the grief of that went into the book.⁴⁰

It is clear from this statement it is not exactly a description of a given situation made with absolute detachment and acute observation that Sinclair presents us with. He seems rather to have chosen a world, namely the world of immigrants, which suited best his purposes (because it was, more or less, characterised by a similar socio-economic situation to his own) and used it as a means to pour into the book his own sufferings, and denounce the ruthless conditions existing in his environment. That Upton Sinclair used the immigrant world for personal purposes is also reflected in the handling of his characters. Upton Sinclair was not too anxious to create a strong type of characters who could emerge from the novel and remain with the reader's mind such as Sister Carrie or Hurstwood (not to mention such characters as Emma Bovary or Anna Karenina). To be sure one will remember, for instance, Jurgis and his wife, and to a lesser extent their relatives because they are crushed by a fatalistic series of misfortunes which befall them in the typical naturalist way. In other words they are remembered because they are presented as victims of the existing socio-economic system.

Terrible things must happen ...
to the characters of the
naturalistic tale. They must
be ... flung into the throes of
a vast and terrible drama that
works itself out in unleashed
passions, in blood and sudden
death.⁴¹

Upton Sinclair's characters, especially immigrant characters, are rather weak and have no initiative of their own. Their creator makes them say or do things he himself wants, and manipulates them in whichever way he likes. Some of the characters' speeches or comments Upton Sinclair makes about his protagonists sometimes seem independent of the development of the story. To give but an example, in chapter 6 when grandmother Majauszkiene (a minor character who appears only once or twice in the novel) relates to the Lithuanian family the truth about their house, Upton Sinclair intervenes in the middle of the narrative to say that "Grandmother Majauszkiene was a socialist, or some such strange thing." (p.83) However Upton Sinclair does not say, for instance, why or how the old lady became a socialist; the fact of her being a socialist does not even have any consequence for the development of the story. We get the paradox of the character of a socialist being independent of the plot advocating socialism. This becomes further apparent towards the end of the novel when Upton Sinclair leaves out the story of his Lithuanian family and starts on his socialistic propaganda. Although Upton Sinclair tries to create a unity between the ending and the rest of the novel through the presence of his hero, Jurgis, in the political meeting, The Jungle still gives the impression that it contains two distinctive parts. In this meeting Jurgis remains a passive attendant, and does not seem to be very much concerned about what is going on.

One could hardly notice his presence, "He took a chair in a dark corner, and sat down upon the edge of it ... He was terrified lest they should expect him to talk." (p.394) The gap between the immigrant and the fully conscious socialist is shown to be almost unbridgeable.

Thus Sinclair's position as a muckraker and his commitment to the socialist cause have more often than not affected the quality of his works, and compromised his objectivity with both good and bad results. Upton Sinclair and his fellow muckrakers (Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell ...) made it their primary task to report the dark realities of their society which they attributed to the new economic system characterising the 1890s and the beginning of the twentieth century. Hence they reported on a variety of problems, such as political and financial corruptions, the development of the trusts and the conditions of the poor, and kept the attention of many people. Although they tried to remain as observers and write only about what they saw, the muckrakers denounced the evils of their society in strong terms, and sometimes went so far as to suggest reforms and to join political parties. The outstanding example was naturally Upton Sinclair who became a socialist. Upton Sinclair attributed all the problems he experienced in his life and saw around him to the rise of ruthless capitalism. Similarly, if Sinclair strongly believed that the cause of

people's sufferings was the selfishness of the prevailing economic system, he was also convinced that the solution to these evils could only be socialism.

In most of his novels Upton Sinclair illustrates the thesis that (according to him) socialism is the solution to his country's evils. To do this he often uses the same technical device, that is the conversion of his hero to socialism. As the beginning of The Jungle shows, Jurgis admires the capitalist system for the opportunities it offers and its working methods. When he visits the stockyards with his family, he shows great enthusiasm. Moreover, when he manages to get a job in the stockyards, he is so impressed by the system under which he works that whenever somebody suggests to him the dark realities of the meat-packing houses, he doubts the man's words or regards them as a profanity.

... it seemed to them impossible of belief that anything so stupendous could have been devised by mortal man. That was why to Jurgis it seemed almost profanity to speak about the place as did Jokubas, sceptically; ... (The Jungle, p.51)

It is not until he experiences the dehumanising conditions in the stockyards and the brutality of his bosses that Jurgis becomes aware of the true nature of the environment in which he lives, and is converted to socialism. In order to make his hero's conversion seem much more plausible, Upton Sinclair launches strong attacks on

capitalism and heightens its evil effects (as the case of the Lithuanian family shows), especially on the lower classes. By doing this he often loses sight of his subject and sacrifices his characters. Towards the end of the novel *Jurgis* as a character disappears in a cloud of socialistic propaganda.

Dreiser's treatment of the immigrant is immune from the flaws which characterise Upton Sinclair's. As was the case with most of the subjects he treated in his novels, when dealing with the immigrant, Theodore Dreiser does keep a certain degree of objectivity. Unlike Upton Sinclair he does not use the immigrant for personal purposes, and remains thus an observer of the facts he witnesses. Dreiser's weaknesses, as far as the treatment of the immigrant is concerned, are of a different nature. If Upton Sinclair deals extensively with the immigrant in his novels, and sometimes gives an exaggerated picture of his conditions, Dreiser, on the contrary, overlooks several aspects of the immigrant's life. In other words, unlike Upton Sinclair's, Dreiser's study of the immigrant is not a deep one. Although Theodore Dreiser himself had an immigrant background he gives only an outside picture of this world. Two reasons may be given to explain this fact. First it seems that Theodore Dreiser was much more concerned with developing his pessimistic determinism, that is by showing the meaninglessness of life and people's useless struggles. In order to prove his thesis Theodore

Dreiser described some of the dark realities of his society because, according to him, they had a negative effect on people. But the depiction of these evil effects did not stem exactly from his deep social concern. The fact that Theodore Dreiser neglected some of the crucial problems of his time, and that he did not ask for reforms in his novels, may be good examples. Second if the immigrant is not so prominent in Dreiser's novels or is not dealt with as such, it may be because Theodore Dreiser took the assimilation process for granted. Hence he did not see the immigrant as constituting a world of his own, but as an integral part of American society, and is therefore included in the picture Dreiser gives of it. The following lines (from An American Tragedy) which depict a scene from American everyday life show, to some extent, that the immigrant is a part of the general crowd and shares their destinies:

And after dinner he (Clyde) made his way out into the principal thoroughfares of Lycurgus, only to observe such crowd of nondescript mill-workers as, judging these streets by day, he would not have fancied swarmed here by night - girls and boys, men and women of various nationalities, and types - Americans, Poles, Hungarians, French, English
-...42

In order to illustrate more clearly the different attitudes of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair towards the immigrant, it is perhaps worth mentioning the following

fact. While Upton Sinclair was very much concerned about the fate of the two Italians, Sacco and Vanzetti, and started writing his novel, Boston, just after the news of their execution; Theodore Dreiser,

... virtually ignored the Sacco-Vanzetti case, which enlisted the sympathies of many who were much less socially sensitive than he, yet he was a leader in the movement to free Tom Mooney only a few years later.⁴³

CHAPTER III City upon a Hill or City of Destruction?

In the previous chapter we have dealt with one of the most important issues which characterised the American 1880s and 1890s, namely immigration to the United States, and analysed how this issue came to be reflected in the novels of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair. Our concern in the present chapter will be with the rise of the American city and its representation in the novels of the same writers. Although the purpose of our study here is not exactly the fictionalisation by American writers of both the immigration issue and the development of American cities, it is worth mentioning, though briefly, certain points common to both. As was the case with immigration, the rapid growth of American cities became mainly noticeable in the 1880s and the 1890s.

The Urban expansion in that decade is impressive. The census, for example, reported that 101 cities of 8,000 or more population doubled their size during the eighties ... Birmingham, Alabama, for example, skyrocketed from 3,000 in 1880 to over 26,000 ten years later; El Paso multiplied itself thirteen times. Minneapolis achieved perhaps the most incredible expansion of any large city, rising from 47,000 to over 164,000. Omaha was not far behind, for it reached 140,000 in 1890, though in 1880 its population was only 30,500.¹

Like the mass of immigrants who poured into the United States, the growth of American cities brought about uneasiness among people and gave rise to protest. Josiah Strong, who pointed out the dangerous consequences of unrestricted immigration in his book, Our Country (1885), expressed the same anxiety about the development of the city. As he put it:

The city has become a serious menace to our civilization ... Here is heaped the social dynamite; here roughs, gamblers, thieves, robbers, lawless and desperate men of all sorts, congregate; men who are ready on any pretext to raise riots for the purpose of destruction and plunder.²

Henry George in his turn expressed his uneasiness in the following terms, "Present tendencies are hurrying modern society toward inevitable catastrophe."³

To some extent the rise of the city was also the result of mass immigration. It is true that other factors such as the advent of industrial revolution in the United States played an important role in the expansion of urban areas. However the massive arrival of European immigrants, who more often than not gathered in the cities where the business centres were located, also had a significant effect in this sense.

The rapid growth of many cities during the 1880s was the result of immigration. The populations of industrial centers such as Fall River, Massachusetts; Patterson, New Jersey; and Rochester, New York; as well as those big

cities -Chicago, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Providence, New York City, and Minneapolis - were from a third to a half foreign born.⁴

Thus it is not surprising that the two subjects of immigration to the United States, and the growth of American cities, came to be linked and either fictionalized or treated together in various works. David M. Fine's The City, The Immigrant and American Fiction, 1880-1920 (1977)⁵ is an attempt to analyse the fiction dealing with urban immigration life, and which was produced between 1880 and 1920, that is the period which saw the great waves of immigration to the United States. "The focus in other words", as he wrote, "is on fiction which is contemporaneous with the events which it describes, which looks to the immediate present for its material rather than the past..."(p.vi) By concentrating on this body of fiction the author's aim was to show that "more than a record of national events, these works are a record of our national consciousness." (p.ix) David Ward's Cities and Immigrants (1971) deals directly with the impact of economic growth and immigration on the transformation and rise of cities in America. He also showed that locational characteristics of residence and employment determined to a great extent the cityward movements of immigrant groups.⁶

Although we might have to refer to the role of immigration in the development of cities in this chapter, our study will be limited on the whole to the city, and how

it came to be perceived by Dreiser and Sinclair. It is important first to consider the history and the sociology of the city, and briefly discuss urban fiction in American literature.

The village, as Lewis Mumford suggested in The City in History (1961), played an important role in the development of the city. It even appears to be at its origin.

The embryonic structure of the city already existed in the village. House, shrine, cistern, public way, agora -not yet a specialized market -all first took form in the village: inventions and organic differentiations waiting to be carried further in the more complex structure of the city ... The beginnings of organized morality, government, law, and justice existed in the village council of the elders.⁷

The village, as is reflected in these lines, contained all the necessary means for man's survival and the institutions which regulated everyday life. It was then at an advanced stage, and the difference between this social structure and the city (at least at its emergence) was hardly noticeable.

In outward form, the ... village already had many of the characteristics of small cities ... Indeed, as purely physical artifacts the remains of the large village and the small town are indistinguishable. (p.19)

Yet in spite of its physical elements, its institutions and culture, and its seeming developed state, the village lacked certain characteristics of the city. As Lewis Mumford also suggested, the features characterising the city could be more or less found in various villages; however taken on its own, none of these villages contained all the traits of the city.

The emergence of the city was not so much the result of the creation of new organic elements, values, and institutions. The urban revolution was rather characterised by the gathering and reorganisation of the village structures which were in a 'chaotic order' in a larger unit: the city. As a consequence the city emerged as a much better organised body than the village, and not only did it come to assume some of the functions held previously by the village, but it also carried them out with more efficiency. By surrendering their own structures and functions, the village or the various villages which gave birth to the city became dependent on it.

At the outset of the nineteenth century the city developed its structures even further. Most of the time this was again achieved at the expense of the village which continued to bring its important contribution to the rise of the city. As the city followed its prodigious growth the gap with the village widened, and this striking difference more often than not caused the destruction of

the village itself. That the gap became so marked lies mainly in the fact that the city appeared in a new light and acquired a new meaning.

Beginning as a representation of the cosmos, a means of bringing heaven down to earth, the city became a symbol of the possible ... (p.31)

The image of the city as "a symbol of the possible" and as a place of success became wide-spread in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth when urban transformation reached new dimensions.⁸ In order to judge the importance of these changes, and the emergence of enticing opportunities, it is perhaps worth analysing some of the aspects which characterised the new city, and in particular the American city.

Undoubtedly one of the most important factors responsible for the rise of the city was the advent of the industrial revolution. The large-scale industrialisation which transformed the lives of many people had the same effect on their environment. In England where the industrial revolution began, various parts of the country, especially the mining regions, became important thanks to the creation of industrial centres. Such cities as Liverpool and Manchester in the black country became the symbols of an unprecedented industrial activity and attracted many people. The most striking example was London which became the trade centre of the world. Hence

London became attractive not only to many British, but also to many foreigners who went there in order to seek business adventures and fortune.

As was the case with their counterparts in Europe, American cities experienced profound transformations at the beginning of industrialisation in the United States. Chicago and other cities in the Middle West offer good examples.

The 1880s also witnessed a rapid growth of cities - The locale of factories and the terminals of railroad lines. Cities, it is true, were not new in America ... But the growth of most of the great cities of the interior awaited the expansion of manufacturing and railroads in the years after the Civil War ... significantly many instances of that rapid urban growth were to be found in the Middle West, where manufacturing was leaping forward. Chicago's population rose from half a million to more than a million; St Paul and Minneapolis doubled in size between 1880 and 1890. Milwaukee, Detroit, Columbus, and Cleveland increased at least 60 per cent.⁹

The new material conditions created by the industrial revolution explain the movement of thousands of people which made the growth of cities possible. In the United States, for instance, the abundance of natural resources and cheap labour resulted in the construction of many factories in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, resulting in an enormous increase of wealth. The latter was further

improved by the development of new technologies and technical inventions which had a direct effect on the transformation of the city. These were, among others, the incandescent lamp, and the Bessemer converter. In 1882, after repeated trial and error, Thomas Alva Edison was granted a patent for his incandescent lamp which became widely used in various fields: public places, houses, commercial areas, and transportation. If Edison's incandescent lamp and the central power station marked the beginning of the electricity age, the use of the Bessemer converter opened that of the steel age. In addition to technological development, the growth of American cities was speeded up by huge improvements in means of transportation, especially the railway system. The years between 1870 and 1914 might indeed be regarded as 'The Railroad Age'. In 1860 the United States had a rail network of 30,000 miles, and at the turn of the century it reached 200,000 miles - almost more than that of all Europe.¹⁰ The consequence of this huge scale industrialisation was that many American cities, especially Chicago and New York, grew bigger and began to compete with European cities.

Thanks to its strategic geographical position on the lake Michigan, and the nearby prairies of the Midwest, Chicago became an active business centre, and a channel through which almost all goods transited. As was the case with other cities, Chicago benefitted a great deal from the development of railroads. The City which possessed a

rudimentary railway system became in the 1870s the largest railroad centre of the world. A great part of this railway system connected Chicago to the Midwest and was used for the transport of wheat, corn, and livestock. The cereals of the Middle West contributed naturally to the birth of a new industry in Chicago, since new techniques and structures (consisting of depots and administrative buildings) were needed in order to organize and distribute the grain.

The train or vessel stops at the side of one of these seventeen elevators, by which the grain is pumped into immense bins, and poured out into other cars or vessels on the other side of the building. The double operation being performed in a few minutes by steam.¹¹

As was the case with cereals, cattle and hogs raising in the Middle West had an important share in the development of the city. It made Chicago 'The Great Bovine City of the World' (Chicago: p.48) by creating the meat-packing industry of which Upton Sinclair gave a detailed account in his famous novel, The Jungle (1906). The Great Lakes, especially the Michigan, are another geographical area which contributed to the prosperity of Chicago. Traffic in the lakes was not only used for the transportation of cereals; several other ships also brought over to Chicago lumber which like cattle and wheat created its own industry.

To handle this trade, the "lumber district" grew up along the South Branch of the river between Halstead and Western avenues. Allied industries appeared too. Not only Bridges' famous prefabricated houses, but planing mills, furniture manufacturing, and wagon and shipbuilding prospered. (Chicago, p.44)

In addition to its growing industries, reflected in the almost constantly rising factory buildings and trade blocks, Chicago saw another revolution in the transportation system which ended traffic congestion as a chief characteristic of the city. At the back of these transformation was a man by the name of Charles Tyson Yerkes on whom Theodore Dreiser modelled his famous character, Frank Cowperwood in 'The Trilogy of Desire', and was inspired by his prodigious activities in Philadelphia and Chicago. At the beginning of the 1870s, the horse-drawn streetcars which dominated the streets of Chicago were abandoned, and the cable cars, first used in San Francisco, took their place. In spite of its success this new transportation system was quickly changed when a more efficient possibility, the electric trolley, was discovered. The new system brought to prominence Charles T. Yerkes, a Philadelphian banker, who saw in the electric trolley a good opportunity to get richer. In 1886 Charles T. Yerkes moved to Chicago and started to organize his system. As the fictionalization of his activities by Dreiser shows, Charles T. Yerkes managed, more often than

not through controversial means, to lay his hands on many traction companies and build several miles of track. When he later moved to New York, Charles T. Yerkes left Chicago with the most sophisticated railway system in the world, which made it possible for the Chicagoans to have easy access to various parts of their city.¹² Chicago's developing efforts and its rapid growth were crowned by the World's Columbian exposition which the city organized in 1893 in Jackson Park. The organization of the exposition was however somewhat controversial, since this event which was meant to celebrate the achievements of many centuries also anticipated at its close the beginning of a great depression which slowed the progress of the city.

New York had also witnessed tremendous development. The geographical position of this city contributed similarly a great deal to its growth at the end of the nineteenth century. Being located on the Atlantic coast, New York became an important business centre handling a large part of American foreign trade. Most American products (such as wheat and raw materials) sent abroad transited via New York which also served as a landing port for imported goods. Frenetic industrialization followed. Factories, engineering works and railway networks, and building construction, were the main characteristics of this city in the 1880s and the 1890s. Perhaps these achievements were best symbolised by the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883, and the appearance of the tall

buildings in the business district of New York which started the age of the skyscrapers. As the city grew bigger and expanded in almost every direction, the need for a faster transport system to connect the various parts of the city became urgent. Hence, like Chicago, New York had in turn its own revolution in the field of transportation. It was not, however, until 1891 that the first tracks were laid for cable cars, and 1900 that the use of the electric trolley became widespread. New York also witnessed, as in all other cities, a second transport revolution with the discovery of the automobile (Ford model T) at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹³

The huge scale industrialisation of the nineteenth century was not the only feature which characterised the growth of Chicago, New York, and indeed other cities. Although cities attracted many workers, thanks to their growing industries, they also came to acquire a much more important meaning in the eyes and minds of people. The city was not only regarded as a place with factories and frenzied constructions, but also became the symbol of a new way of life. One of the dominant features of this new way of life was the emergence of the giant department stores which Dreiser depicted in Sister Carrie (1900). These multistorey markets opened a new era in goods and consumption, and attracted many people. Their importance is best reflected in the following lines:

Of all city spectacles, none
surpassed the giant department
store, the emporium of

consumption born and nurtured in these years. Here the citizen met a new world of goods: not goods alone, but a world of goods, constructed and shaped by the store into objects of desire. Here the very word "consumption" came to life.¹⁴

This world of goods contained, on its various floors, all consumer needs and also other more conspicuously expensive products. Thanks to better organization they also made it possible for the customer to view a great variety of their products. Moreover through advertising they attracted a lot of people and controlled both needs and desires. As Alan Trachtenberg has put it, "Proferring infinite charm at cheap prices, it sold along with its goods a modern lesson in living".¹⁵ As the nineteenth century drew to its end, the giant department stores spread to several American cities.

Life in the cities was furthermore transformed by new inventions. To give but one example, Edison's incandescent lamp did not only revolutionize people's domestic life, but also their public life. The use of the incandescent lamp for street lighting made it possible for people to spend their evenings outside. Many people adopted this new way of life because the giant department stores, business buildings, and public places, which also made a wide use of Edison's incandescent lamp, became a great attraction. Shop windows in particular were often surrounded by people who would pause in their nightly city walks under the electric

lights to admire the advertised goods and satisfy their curiosity. Hence right into the late hours of the night, city streets, such as Fifth Avenue and Ashland Avenue, remained full of life.

The city also provided its dwellers with various other facilities where they could spend their spare times. The most important were the parks which attracted young people and whole families during the week-ends. An illustrative example is New York's Central Park which was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, and had 400,000 trees and shrubs covering a surface of 820 acres.¹⁶ Other parks such as the Prospect Park (N.Y.) where people could play lawn tennis, and Lincoln Park in Chicago, were no less important, and they were often crowded. Cultural entertainments were another aspect of the everyday life of the rising city. Those businessmen and financiers who were busy with the accumulation of capital, or even the ordinary city dwellers, found time or money to attend performances in the various theatres and concert halls. The growing number of colleges and universities also gave more people the benefit of education. It is these facilities and advantages which often lured the huge mass of people to the city. For many of them, the city, thanks to its developed institutions, became the symbol of success, the place where anybody, even among the lower classes, could fulfil his ambitions. In other words the city, especially in America, came to be associated with the

Horatio Alger myth. Perhaps the financial quarter at Wall Street which symbolises in a way the wealth of New York and is a meeting place of big financiers, some of whom started at the bottom of the social ladder, is the most significant symbol of the alliance between the city and the Horatio Alger myth.

Yet the city was not only a land of opportunities, or a place where anybody could lead a comfortable life. If the city came to be regarded as the 'nerve of civilisation' it also became the place where all sorts of evils and vices developed. City life destroyed, among other things, the community life which characterised the village, and created a new kind of relationship between people. Although city dwellers seem to be near each other thanks to their use of the same means of transport, the same theatres, and concert halls, and mingle with each other in the streets, they remained socially separate. As Josiah Strong, who felt a certain uneasiness in face of the rapid rise of the city, also wrote:

In the city there is little or no sense of neighborhood - you may be separated from your next neighbor by only a few inches, and yet for years never see his face or learn his name - mere proximity does not imply social touch.¹⁷

It is this new kind of relationship which also had evil consequences for people. Suicide is indeed often attributed by sociologists to the loneliness felt by people in the city and the indifference of their surrounding.¹⁸ As

it kept growing and gradually acquired its civilising features, the city saw an increasing looseness of moral standards. Crime, prostitution, and alcoholism, developed and became an integral part of the everyday life of such cities as New York and Chicago. These vices appeared especially among the lower class and in the slums, often as a result of poverty; however the moral standards among middle and upper classes were not much higher. Such publications as George Elligton's book, The Women of New York (New York, 1870), and Matthew Hale Smith's Sunshine and Shadow in New York (Hartford, 1868), produced pictures which represented the dissipations of high society.¹⁹

Like the factory, the theatre, and the concert hall, the slum also came to characterise the growth of the city. The mass of people who had high hopes and came to the city in great waves to fulfil their ambitions were more often than not speedily disillusioned. They remained at the margin of city life and formed a world of their own - a world which was often poverty-stricken. In the 1880s, while a part of the population of New York exploited to the full the opportunities offered by the city and led a luxurious way of life, Jacob Riis, a police reporter, took his camera to the slums of New York, and produced a series of photographs which showed to Americans, and more especially to the leisure class, "how the other half

lives".²⁰ As shown by the pictures taken by Jacob Riis the conditions in which some people, especially the immigrants, lived were to say the least inhuman.

These, then, are some of the aspects which characterised the American city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The rise of the city with its various features became like other phenomena a subject matter for American writers. An early example is Melville's 'Bartleby the scrivener' (1853), a complex story which has been interpreted in many ways.²¹ It seems to illustrate, among others, the negative effect of urban life on the individual. The subtitle of the tale, 'A Story of Wall Street' supports this suggestion. Moreover in his analysis of 'Bartleby the scrivener', Leo Marx wrote, "There is a sense in which Bartleby's state of mind may be understood as a response to the hostile world of Wall Street".²² This idea is somewhat also reflected in F.O. Matthiessen's statement, "'Bartleby' is a tragedy of utter negation, of the enduring hopelessness of a young man who is absolutely alone, 'a bit of a wreck in the Mid-Atlantic' which is New York".²³ Bartleby's acceptance of his new job as a copyist in a Wall Street lawyer's premises marks his isolation from the outside world. His employer's office becomes a kind of refuge for him. Unlike the other workers, he never leaves the place, and eats and sleeps where he works. Melville emphasizes his hero's

isolation by describing the decor which surrounds him. From his place Bartleby can only perceive brick walls as his main view. Bartleby's revolt against the Wall Street world and his refusal to conform, as it were, to its way of life is also suggested by his unwillingness to resume the alienated work of his copying activities.

Impressions of the American city were also recorded in some of Walt Whitman's works. As described by Whitman the city appears in its two extreme characteristics, that is, as a land of splendour and picturesqueness, and as a place which breeds vice. Hence in 1871 Walt Whitman wrote in Democratic Vistas:

These cities, crowded with petty grotesques, malformations, phantoms, playing antics ... everywhere, in shop, street, church, theatre, barroom, official chair, are pervading flipancy and vulgarity, low cunning, infidelity - everywhere the youth puny, impudent, floppish, prematurely ripe - everywhere an abnormal libidinousness, unhealthy forms, male, female, painted, padded, dyed, chignor'd, muddy complexions, bad blood, the capacity for good motherhood deceasing or deceas'd, shallow notions of beauty, with a range of manners, or rather lack of manners ... probably the meanest to be seen in the world.²⁴

In the following lines taken from the same piece of work, Walt Whitman gave rather a positive picture of the city:

I am now (sept 1870) again in New York City and Brooklyn on few weeks' vacation. The

splendour, picturesqueness, and oceanic amplitude and rush of these great cities, the unsurpass'd situation, rivers and bay, sparkling sea-tides, costly and lofty new buildings, facades of marble and iron, of original grandeur and elegance of design, with the masses of gay color, the preponderance of white and blue, the flags flying, the endless ships, the tumultuous streets, Broadway, the heavy, low, musical roar, hardly ever intermitted, even at night; the jobbers' houses, the rich shops, the wharves, the great central park, and the Brooklyn Park of hills ... the assemblages of the citizens in their groups, conversations, trades, evening amusements, or along the by-quarters - these, I say, and the like of these, completely satisfy my senses of power, fullness, notion, &c., and give me through such senses and appetites, and through my esthetic conscience a continued exaltation and absolute fulfilment. (Democratic Vistas, p.326)

This passage was worth quoting in full for two reasons. First in it Whitman renders the atmosphere which characterised the growth of New York city and its fascinating material progress. His detailed description reflects all the glamorous aspects of the city and emphasizes its picturesqueness. The accumulative enumeration of many of these aspects in a long breathtaking sentence also reveals the exciting fascination with the city. Moreover this minute description suggests the acute sense of observation of the author, and his interest in the minor elements. Second one can see through this passage, especially in the

last lines, Whitman's enthusiasm for, and approval of, the new way of life that came to characterise New York. The attractive scenes he saw seem to satisfy a certain quest for artistic beauty and fill him with a sense of spiritual fulfilment.

To take an extreme contrast in Henry James's work it is both European cities (London, Paris, Rome etc.) and American cities (Boston, New York) which act as a stage for the novel. However, James's self-exile to Europe made him miss many socio-economic and political changes which occurred in his country. He was more at ease in dealing with European themes. In The American Scene (1907) he recorded upon his return to America, his impression about his country after twenty years of absence.

After the Haymarket affair (1886) which had a strong influence on him, William Dean Howells became increasingly interested in the socio-economic issues of his country, and tried to treat them in his fiction. Such interest resulted in the production of two novels, Annie Kilburn (1888) where W.D. Howells treated the relations between labour and capital, and especially, A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890) where he dealt with the rise of urban-industrial America. A Hazard of New Fortunes was among the first American novels which attempted a whole and minute description of the city. In it William Dean Howells described various physical aspects of New York (streets, buildings, etc.) and showed through the depiction

of the means of transport the technological development which came to characterise the city. In addition he gave a picture of the social conditions prevailing in New York, and showed people's restlessness in face of rapid urban changes.

With Stephen Crane's Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893), the city novel entered a new phase. In this novel Stephen Crane introduced a new aspect which was alien to American literature and to the majority of American people, namely a description of the precarious living conditions in the slums. Crane's Maggie had a limited success. Although it was acclaimed by some people for its 'realistic' descriptions of the crude realities of America, it received little critical analysis and was rejected by middle-class audiences for exactly the same reason. Moreover in this novel Crane's study of the city was somewhat limited since he only dealt with one aspect of city life. The American city was also the setting of some of Norris's novels. Scenes from Chicago's life appeared in McTeague (1899), and mainly in The Pit (1903), where Norris gave an insight into the corruption existing in the business centres of Chicago. In his autobiographical novel, A Son of the Middle Border (1917), Hamlin Garland also gave his impressions about the new American city. As the following description reveals, Hamlin Garland's discovery of New York is full of enthusiasm and fascination:

To us Broadway was a storm, a cyclone, an abnormal unholy congestion of human souls. The

friction of feet on the pavement was like the hissing of waves on the beach ... Here for the first time, I observed the electric light shadows, so clear cut, so marvellous ... I am glad to remember that we got as far as Madison Square which was like discovering another and still more enchanting island of romance ... Each form, each shadow was a miracle ... The poetry and the majesty lost nothing of its power under the moon.²⁵

As some of the words show, Hamlin Garland's description is sometimes poetical, and puts in evidence the attractiveness of the city. However other terms in this description (e.g. 'a storm', 'or cyclone', and 'abnormal unholy congestion') also suggest an atmosphere of terror. Less-known writers such as Marion Crawford and Henry B. Fuller also became interested in the rise of the American city and gave a description of some of its aspects. In Katherine Lauderdale (1894), Marion Crawford dealt with the way of life of upper-class New York society; while in the novels of Henry B. Fuller, The Cliff Dwellers (1893), With the Procession (1895), and Under the Skylights (1901), Chicago found an important place.

Although the writers mentioned above dealt more or less with the development of the American city in their novels, none of them gave such a complete description of it or caught so dexterously its atmosphere as Dreiser did at the beginning of the century in Sister Carrie or in his

other novels. In addition Dreiser gave detailed accounts of Chicago and New York in some of his non-fictional work such as, A Book About Myself (1922), The Color of a Great City (1923), and Dawn (1931).

All Dreiser's novels have, for all practical purposes, the city for a setting. In Sister Carrie the story begins in Chicago and half-way through moves to Montreal for a short while, then to New York. The story of Sister Carrie is too well-known to be repeated here in detail. As the most important work of Dreiser this novel has been scrutinised by many critics. The opening scene of Jennie Gerhardt (1911) is the principal hotel in Columbus, Ohio, the hometown of the Gerhardt family. It is in this hotel that Jennie Gerhardt comes into contact with Senator Brander who later seduces her. When he learns of his daughter's tragedy, William Gerhardt, for whom this incident is a severe blow to his strict religious principles, turns Jennie out of his house. As a consequence Jennie moves to Cleveland, then a growing city, where she joins her brother Bass, and takes a job as a maid in a large residence. There she meets again a wealthy man, Lester Kane, who seduces her. From Cleveland, Lester Kane and Jennie move to Chicago which is the setting of the rest of the novel. In The Financier (1912), Philadelphia is the first city which serves as a background for Frank Cowperwood's prodigious business career as well as his downfall. In order to sever any link with his unfortunate

past, Frank Cowperwood decides to leave Philadelphia for Chicago which offered a lot of opportunities. Hence The Financier ends with Frank Cowperwood on the verge of leaving Philadelphia. Its immediate sequel, The Titan (1914) (the second novel of 'The Trilogy of Desire'), shows Dreiser's hero arriving in Chicago in order to begin his new business career. At the end of The Titan Cowperwood sells all his interests and moves once again to New York in order to conquer the financial and business milieus of this city. Since it was the business career of Charles T. Yerkes in Chicago which was at the origin of 'The Trilogy of Desire', the choice of this city as a setting for Cowperwood's rise in The Titan was quite adequate.

In An American Tragedy (1925) Clyde Griffiths goes successively from Kansas City, his hometown, to Chicago, where he meets his wealthy uncle, then to the more sophisticated world of Lycurgus. Eugene Witla in The 'Genius' (1915) follows the same road as his creator, Dreiser, and Carrie Meeber in Sister Carrie. In order to carry out his artistic ambitions, he leaves Alexandria his little dull village for Chicago where he feels his future lies. Chicago offered indeed a great opportunity to Eugene Witla who gradually made his reputation as an eminent artist. In spite of its artistic facilities Chicago was, however, a city where business and industrialisation were the only things people really cared for. So Eugene Witla decides to move again to New York which

emerges as one of the most important artistic centres in the world. It is in New York that he wins fame. The Bulwark (1946) and The Stoic (1947) (third novel of 'The Trilogy of Desire') are set in Philadelphia, and New York and London respectively.

It is worth mentioning, on the other hand, that it is mainly in Chicago that most of Dreiser's novels are situated. This point has been widely discussed by John T. Flanagan in an essay entitled, 'Theodore Dreiser's Chicago'. By reviewing some of the novels he showed the important place that Chicago holds in the novels of Theodore Dreiser:

Of Dreiser's eight novels, four are located partly or wholly in Chicago, and a fifth, An American Tragedy (1925), includes Chicago scenes. Twenty-eight chapters of Dreiser's first novel, Sister Carrie (1900), over half the book, have a Chicago setting. The major part of Jennie Gerhardt's story in the novel of the same name (1911) depicts the Chicago milieu. The city serves as the entire background of The Titan (1914) and the scene for some hundred pages of The "Genius" (1915).²⁶

Because of its phenomenal growth in the 1890s and the 1900s Chicago appealed to many American writers who dealt with the treatment of urban life in the United States. Upton Sinclair, for instance, also made Chicago the background of his most important novel The Jungle. In this novel, as is well known, Sinclair shows the dehuman-

ising conditions existing in one of those industries which contributed a great deal to the development of Chicago, namely the meat-packing industry. However if Sinclair does manage to give a detailed description of the meat-packing houses, and lay bare the crude realities of this industry, his description of the city is limited. At any rate it does not rank with the descriptions of Chicago that Dreiser gives in his novels. Since The Jungle tells the story of a Lithuanian family in the stockyards, it is mainly this area of Chicago which monopolises almost all the descriptions in the book. Sinclair also deals with city life in The Metropolis (1908). However, as is the case with Chicago in The Jungle, there is almost no minute description of New York city where the story is situated. Sinclair limits himself mainly to the description of the way of life of New York's upper classes and their sumptuous houses.

That the American City (especially Chicago and New York) found a larger place, and was described more explicitly in Dreiser's novels than in Sinclair's, is the result, among others, of each of the two writers' acquaintance with urban areas. Dreiser's experience in Chicago and New York has often been stressed by various critics. John T. Flanagan, to quote him again, showed for instance how thanks to his actual knowledge of Chicago Dreiser exploited widely its socio-economic background in his novels:

Dreiser's contact with Chicago began early in his life, and if harrowing and painful at the

time, assumed extra-ordinary significance later ... much of the material gained in his fashion became a substantial part of his fiction in later years ... ('Dreiser's Chicago', p.131)

Undoubtedly Chicago was more familiar to Dreiser than it was to Sinclair. As related in his autobiography American Outpost (1932), Sinclair did not live in Chicago. His first contact with this city came in October 1904 when he was asked to report working conditions in the stockyards: one investigation which gave birth to The Jungle. In order to achieve his task Upton Sinclair spent seven weeks among 'the wage-slaves' of the beef trust. While he was in Chicago he also remembers 'being invited to Hull House to dinner' where he sat next to 'the saintly Jane Addams'.²⁷

This was on the whole Sinclair's first experience in Chicago, as he reported it in American Outpost. Whether it was because of his demanding assignment, or for want of time, or both of these, Sinclair does not seem to have seen much of the city apart from its meat-packing houses. Indeed Upton Sinclair did not give a minute description of the city, or even suggest the impression made on him by Chicago. Such, however, was not the case of Theodore Dreiser. For one thing Dreiser's contact with Chicago came much earlier than Sinclair's when the writer was only

twelve years of age. When Dreiser arrived in 1883, Chicago was undergoing a huge transformation which made a strong impression on the young writer.

It is not necessary for me to say that all this made a deep impression on me. I was for watching it for ever, the theatre over the way, the park in the next street, or, hanging out of one of our windows, the rear panorama. It was all so different from anything I had ever seen or known. In Evansville was no such congestion, no such moving tide of people, no such enthusiasm for living. I was lost in a vapour of something so rich that it was like food to the hungry, odorous and meaningful like flowers to those who love.²⁸

Unlike Sinclair, Dreiser stayed in Chicago several years. He came to Chicago twice and left it; but in 1889 he returned to the city where he lived permanently until 1892. During his stay in Chicago, Dreiser took a series of jobs; first as a dishwasher in a Greek restaurant, cleaning stoves in a hardware store; then assisting a painter photographer in his studio; and as an employee of the wholesale hardware house of Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett and Company. When he finally established himself in Chicago Dreiser took jobs in various places before he ended up as a newspaperman in the Chicago Daily Globe. As a journalist for the Globe Dreiser had the opportunity to cover the Democratic National Convention, in June 1892. Later when he moved to the St Louis Globe Democrat he was asked to

report on the World's Columbian Fair of Chicago. The various jobs that Dreiser took, and his experience in journalism led him to many places of Chicago such as, Ashland, Ogden, and Wabash Avenues, and South State and East Harrison etc. Dreiser also became well acquainted with the neighborhoods where he lived, especially West Madison Street at Throop where he stayed with his family upon their arrival in Chicago in 1885.²⁹ Dreiser's acquaintance with Chicago can be traceable not only in his novels, but also in Dawn and A Book About Myself, which also provide various descriptions of city life.

The same thing may be repeated again as far as New York is concerned. Although it was Upton Sinclair who first came in 1888 in contact with New York when he was only ten, it was Theodore Dreiser (who moved to New York six years later, in 1894) who described the most striking aspects of its everyday life in such works as Sister Carrie, The 'Genius', and The Color of a Great City. To some extent Dreiser went through the same events he experienced in the previous years in Chicago. Upon his arrival in New York, he had difficulties finding a job and experienced hard times. Even when he managed to resume his newspaper activities his financial situation did not change a great deal. Dreiser took jobs in various newspapers such as Ev'ry Month, Daily News and Smith's

Magazine, and the Delineator, in order to live. Once again his experience on these magazines brought him in contact with many aspects of New York's life.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that Sinclair in fact lacked experience of New York. The following lines taken from his auto biographical work American Outpost suggest the contrary:

Between the ages of sixteen and twenty I explored the situation in New York City, and made discoveries which for me were epoch-making. The saloon-keeper, who had been the villain of my childhood melodrama was merely a tool and victim of the big liquor interests and politician, and police. The twin bases of the political power of Tammany Hall were the saloon graft and the sale of women. (p.40)

It was these kinds of discoveries which turned Sinclair to the socialist reformer we know. Moreover when critics found The Metropolis 'a poor novel' on the grounds that "the author didn't know the thing called 'society'", Upton Sinclair answered, "As a matter of fact, the reason was exactly the opposite; the author knew 'society' too well to overcome his distaste for it". (American Outpost, p.13)

With the rise of the city the movements of population became increasingly frequent. These movements were not only from the poor villages to cities, but also from city to city, and even from country to country. (The opportunities offered by the city and people's interests being

determinant factors in this sense.) The growth of the city with all its luring aspects had indeed an irresistible effect on many people who did not hesitate, as Lewis Mumford put it, "to trade mobility for security". (p.5) In their city fiction Dreiser and Sinclair underlined this fact. Lured by the glittering opportunities of the city their heroes were often shown moving from their village or hometown to the metropolis in order to fulfil their ambitions. The most notable example is, naturally, Carrie Meeber who leaves her rural Wisconsin for Chicago:

When Caroline Meeber boarded the afternoon train for Chicago her total outfit consisted of a small trunk, which was checked in the baggage car, a cheap imitation alligator skin satchel holding some minor details of the toilet, a small lunch in a paper box and a yellow leather snap purse, containing her ticket, a scrap of paper with her sister's address in Van Buren Street, and four dollars in money ... A gush of tears at her mother's farewell kiss, a touch in the throat when the cars clacked by the flour mill where her father worked by the day, a pathetic sigh as the familiar green environs of the village passed in review, and the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken.³⁰

Similarly Eugene Witla in The 'Genius', who is animated by the same dreams as Sister Carrie's, leaves his small village, Alexandria, for Chicago. His departure, as the following lines show, recalls that of Sister Carrie:

He stepped on the train. The bell rang. Out the cars rolled. Out and on. He looked out on the familiar scenes and then a real ache came to him -Stella, his mother, his father, Myrtle, the little home. They were all going out of his life.³¹

The image of the hero boarding the train amid the farewells of his family, and heading towards Chicago in order to conquer the city, also occurs at the beginning of The Titan. Technological implacability of the train reinforces sense of naturalist, fated with the city. Unlike Sister Carrie and Eugene Witla, Frank Cowperwood does not live in a village but in Philadelphia which is nonetheless a big city - at least that is how it appears from Dreiser's description in The Financier. However, Cowperwood has bad records in this city, besides Chicago is 'advantageous anyhow'.

He (Cowperwood) took the train one day, his charming mistress, now only twenty-six, coming to the station to see him off.³²

The development of the railroads was indeed a crucial factor in the uprooting of hundreds of thousands of people from their native areas, and the shaping of modern America. In the manner of Sister Carrie, Eugene Witla, and Cowperwood, many people bid farewell to their families and set out for a new life.

In The Jungle and The Metropolis, it is also the opportunities of the big city which apparently attract Sinclair's heroes. Jurgis and his family sail to America

because they have heard that this country is the land of endless wealth and where one can get rich easily. Similarly Alan Montague moves from the south to New York because he regards this city as "the centre of his hopes of the future".³³ If the "train image" marks the departure of Dreiser's heroes to the city and their beginning of a new life, in Sinclair's novels such information is rather conveyed through the heroes' sudden resolution to leave their homeland. Thus while in Sister Carrie, The Titan, and The 'Genius', Dreiser shows his heroes boarding the train, and sometimes approaching their destination, in The Jungle and The Metropolis, Sinclair's heroes are shown settled for their departure and immediately afterward in the city. Their journeys to the city are not, however, described. The following lines from The Metropolis illustrate this point:

They had taken the sudden resolution to settle up their affairs and move to New York. There were Montague and his mother, and cousin Alice, who was nineteen, and old 'Mammy Lucy', Mrs Montague's servant. Oliver has met them at Jersey City, radiant with happiness. (The Metropolis, p.19)

Apart from Frank Cowperwood, Dreiser's and Sinclair's characters initially lack any knowledge or experience of the city. Hence when they reach their destination, they "... face it with the wide open eyes of a child". (The Metropolis, p.19) And as a child each of these characters starts to make discoveries about the metropolis, and

confront dreams with realities. Because of the big differences between their native villages and the city, and the sudden change of milieu, the atmosphere characterising their arrival in the metropolis is often one of bewilderment, uneasiness, and even of terror. Upon her arrival in Chicago, Sister Carrie, for example, loses the seeming self-confidence which brought her to the city, and feels out of her depth:

Her heart was troubled by a kind of terror. The fact that she was alone, away from home, rushing into a great sea of life and endeavour, began to tell. She could not help but feel a little choked for breath - a little sick as her heart beat so fast - she half closed her eyes and tried to think it was nothing, that Columbia city was only a little way off.
(Sister Carrie, p.10)

The effect of the first contact with the city on Carrie is demoralizing. Dreiser's description of such an effect leaves no doubt about its perilous proportions. Carrie is surrounded by a suffocating atmosphere, and feels a kind of terror since her life appears in danger. Dreiser also presents his heroine's first contact with Chicago as a struggle. While Chicago tries to grind down Sister Carrie with its threatening atmosphere, she herself struggles to survive.

As is the case with Sister Carrie, Sinclair's hero, Alan Montague, feels a certain malaise upon his arrival in New York:

It was like being swept into a maelstrom, first the hurrying throngs on the ferry-boat, and then the cabmen, the newsboys shouting, and the cars with changing groups; then the swift motor, gliding between trucks and carriages, and around corners where big policemen shepherd the scurrying populace.

(The Metropolis, p.19)

Here also the frenzied atmosphere of New York has an engulfing effect. Alan Montague is overtaken by the speedy urban way of life, and seems lost. Sinclair stresses the sweeping effect of the city through the use of dynamic terms such as 'swept', 'swift', 'hurrying'.

In these descriptions Dreiser and Sinclair give somehow a similar image of the city. Dreiser describes it as 'a great sea', while Sinclair compares it to a 'maelstrom'. This image of the city occurs quite often in the novels of Dreiser, especially in Sister Carrie. The sea (or the water image) conveys an idea of vastness and infinity, and has a threatening power. Hence it is used to symbolise the rapid growth of American cities and their gargantuan proportions. In addition it reflects people's isolation and their helplessness in modern urban life, and anticipates their insecure future. In another passage, Dreiser also refers to Sister Carrie by using the sea image:

She was much alone, a lone figure in a tossing sea ... The little shop girl was getting into deep water. She was

letting her few supports float
away from her. (Sister Carrie,
p.12)

Dreiser also emphasizes the helplessness and the insignificance of man in the city by describing New York as an 'ocean' where Hurstwood is an 'inconspicuous drop'. (p.305)

However if the city appears at first sight as a place of terror to Sister Carrie or Alan Montague, this feeling is not so much the result of its evil aspects but rather of its power and grandeur which overwhelms the characters. Once the startling first contact is over, and as the city gradually reveals its mysteries, the characters, at least Sister Carrie if not Alan Montague, respond in a different way to their new environment. The kind of uneasiness they feel upon their arrival in the city gives way to admiration and fascination. When Sister Carrie, for instance, goes down to the streets of Chicago to look for a job and has a wider picture of the city, "a flame of envy lighted in her heart. She realized in a dim way how much the city held -wealth, fashion, ease -every adornment for women, and she longed for dress and beauty with a whole and fullsome heart". (p.23) As Dreiser describes it, the city of Chicago in which Sister Carrie sets foot one day of August 1889 is full of life and glamour. Everything that Sister Carrie sees is new and bustling with liveliness so that Chicago appears to belong to the world of the sublime. Dreiser's detailed descriptions of Chicago reveal that

Carrie's wonder is far from being groundless. Through these depictions the magic character and the hypnotic atmosphere which are only proper to this city are laid bare. Various elements of Chicago show the liveliness of this city and its majesty. But it is undoubtedly the giant department stores 'a characteristic of Chicago then' which reflect best the sublime Chicagoan world. The passage where Dreiser describes these department stores is worth quoting in full, since it does not only give us an idea about these giant stores themselves, but it also illustrates the rise of the city and its new way of life.

The nature of these vast retail combinations, should they ever permanently disappear, will form an interesting chapter in the commercial history of our nation. Such a flowering out of a modest trade principle the world had never witnessed up to that time. They were among the line of the most effective retail organization, with hundreds of stores coordinated into one, and laid out upon the most imposing and economic basis. They were handsome, bustling, successful affairs, with a host of clerks and a swarm of patrons. Carrie passed along the busy aisles, much affected by the remarkable displays of trinkets, dress goods, shoes, stationery, jewelry. Each separate counter was a show place of dazzling interest and attraction. She could not help feeling the claim of each trinket and valuable upon her personally and yet she did not stop. There was nothing there which she could not have used - nothing which she did not long to own. The dainty slippers

and stockings, the delicately frilled skirts and petticoats; the laces, ribbons, hair combs, purses, all touched her with individual desires, and she felt keenly the fact that not any of these things were in the range of her purchase. (p.22)

In this passage Dreiser gives a mixture of factual and fictional descriptions which focus mainly on the rise of the department stores, and his heroine's response to these commercial institutions. Dreiser's description of the giant department stores at the beginning of this passage is journalistic. It is a report on a significant phase in American economic development, as embodied in the emergence of a pioneering type of stores, which could have made the front page of any newspaper (particularly a commercial newspaper) of the time. As is often the case with his descriptions, Dreiser gives a detailed and well structured depiction of the department stores. He starts with the general and external features of the multistorey department, and then, in the second part, by following Sister Carrie he describes their interior, and reveals the wide range of goods they display.

The giant department stores acquire a historical importance in Dreiser's eyes. His description of these institutions, as the phrase "... should they ever disappear ..." suggests, is meant for posterity, or as a historical document. Dreiser's description also reflects both his fascination and admiration. Dreiser is mainly impressed by the grandeur and efficiency of the multistorey depart-

ments. The adjectives he uses in order to qualify these stores (e.g. 'vast', 'interesting', 'effective', 'most imposing', 'handsome', 'bustling') convey the idea of greatness and practicality. Dreiser also emphasizes the gigantic proportions of the stores by using such words as 'host' and 'swarm' which express the multitude, and at the same time a sense of effective discipline and confusion. Behind Dreiser's fascination in face of the giant department stores also lies a certain admiration for the economic system which created this unprecedented development. To a certain extent Dreiser admired American capitalism because it cultivated the notions of greatness and success, and, because its laissez-faire policies gave the freedom to people to realise large-scale projects. If Dreiser was often disheartened by the inequalities he saw in his country, similarly he felt the attractive force of fetishized commodities.

From the description of the giant department stores Dreiser shifts the focus on Sister Carrie without transition, so that Carrie appears not as a fictional character, but a common individual among the "swarm of patrons" that visit the stores. The juxtaposition of the journalistic and the fictional descriptions makes the whole passage more vivid and realistic. Carrie responds to the department stores with a mixed feeling. Like Dreiser, she is fascinated by their magnificence and the goods they display; but she also feels a certain frustration because

of her financial restrictions, and her inability to acquire the things she longs for. What makes Carrie's frustration seem almost tragic is that all the goods she sees, or that Dreiser lists here, are feminine items which appear indispensable to city women.

Dreiser's minute listing of these goods and Carrie's longing for them emphasizes the significant role of the giant department stores in city life. It is this kind of commercial institution which became one of the ideal places for the display of the growing city luxuries, and determined to some extent the mode of life in urban areas. Carrie soon realises this when she starts to wander in the city, and goes through an even more painful experience. Whether in the streets, the restaurants, or the institutions where she applies for a job, Carrie sees that most beautiful clothes do not only give to men and women a graceful appearance, but also give them a certain assurance and power. Amid such brilliance Carrie appears more of an outcast, and, in her poverty, she feels deeply the cruel impact of city life on her.

She noticed, too, with a touch at the heart, the fine ladies who elbowed and ignored her ... their clothes were neat, in many instances fine and wherever she encountered the eye of one, it was only to recognise in it a keen analysis of her own position - her individual shortcomings of dress and the shadow of manner which she thought must hang about her and make clear to all who and what she was. (p.23)

In this passage Dreiser makes it clear that the 'psychology of clothes' is a significant socio-economic factor especially in city life. Clothes are indeed a means to determine people's social positions and an important mark of distinction between the classes. Moreover the development of fashion, and the emergence of new luxuries, which accompanied the rise of the city also signalled the widening gap between rich and poor. Carrie, who appears innocent and lacking social awareness throughout the novel, becomes suddenly conscious of her social position and her rural origins when it comes to dressing. Ironically, it is not the fine ladies that Carrie comes across in the streets who ignore her or analyse her outfit, but it is rather Carrie herself who, because of her shortcomings in the matter of clothing and her poverty, is ashamed of her situation, and feels the scrutinising eyes of the city crowd gazing at her. Later Carrie realizes even more 'how bad off she was' and the social importance of clothes in city life when Drouet, whom she admires for his good clothes and seems, as Dreiser's description of him shows, an expert in the art of clothing, suggests that she should get herself some clothes. It is in order to overcome the clothes obstacle that Carrie accepts the money that Drouet offers her, and consequently starts to yield to his desires.

Like Sister Carrie, Alice, Montague's cousin, who comes from the rural south (The Metropolis (1908)) has to be newly and adequately equipped with clothes in order to make her debut in the highly sophisticated world of New York. The manner in which Alice acquires her clothes reflects itself a feature which came to characterise the fashion world and the upper classes' way of life. The choice of her clothes is neither left to Alice herself nor to one of the women (Mrs Montague or her servant) who know perhaps what suits the young lady. It is instead a man, Reggie Mann, who decides about Alice's clothes, and who accomplishes his task with ease. Alice is indeed amazed by such practice and the man's ability, "It was queer Alan! I never went shopping with a man before. And he's so matter-of-fact. You know, he bought me -everything!"(p.59) Here Sinclair uses Alice's innocence to make a merciless caricature of the practices of New York upper classes. What seems to bewilder the inexperienced young lady is but a practice that the wealthy people came to adopt with the development of fashion. In The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899), Thorstein Veblen referred to this custom as an 'expression of the pecuniary culture'. Dress, as he suggested is an important means to display the wealth of the rich, and it is especially women's function to wear conspicuous clothes in order to live up to the accredited standards of the establishment, and make the reputability of the household. In order to achieve its purpose dress,

as Veblen also put it, "... must not only be conspicuously expensive ..., it must at the same time be up to date'.³⁴ In the world of fashion it is the task of people like Reggie Mann in Sinclair's novel to design new garments for upper class ladies or advise them about conspicuously expensive and up to date clothes. To acquire the services of such men is another means for the wealthy to show "conspicuously" their way of life.

Unlike his cousin Alice, Alan Montague responds to the pecuniary culture of New York upper classes with a feeling of discomfort and rejection. In one of his descriptions of the rich's social gathering Sinclair shows him rather annoyed at the sight of the somewhat daring women's dresses:

Montague did his best to accustom himself to the gowns of the women, which were cut lower than any he had ever seen in his life; but he hesitated every time he turned to speak to the young lady beside him, because he could look so deep down in her bosom, and it was difficult for him to realise that she did not mind. (The Metropolis, p.45)

Sinclair, like Dreiser, emphasizes here the importance of dress in class differentiations. Montague's discomfort in this gathering is also caused by the luxurious clothes of the attendants which suggest their powerful positions, and seem to remind him by the same token of his lower socio-economic status. However, unlike the desirable and innocent Sister Carrie, Alan Montague does not succumb to

'the psychology of clothes' in order to further his social advance. Instead, as the uneasiness he shows when in company of upper class women reveals, he comes to view their fashion and city customs in general as morally degrading.

The different attitudes of Sister Carrie and Alan Montague towards city fashion reflects to a large extent their general response to the city throughout Sister Carrie and The Metropolis respectively. Hence whereas in Dreiser's novel the city emerges as a wonderland where almost everything fascinates the heroine, in Sinclair's, although the city dealt with is wealthy and luxurious, it does not appear as attractive as the Dreiserian city, and, Alan Montague is rather more sceptical about everything he sees. The huge mansions into which Montague is introduced are another example. The upper classes' palaces, as Sinclair's descriptions of them show, do not especially strike one's eye with their artistic beauty, but rather with their parade of conspicuous expense. They often appear as grim and dull, designed without discriminating tastes. Here, for instance, is a description of one of them:

... before them was a mighty granite pile in the twilight, with a draw bridge and moat, and four great castellated towers. 'Black Forest' was built in imitation of a famous old fortress in Provence. Only the fortress had forty small rooms, and its modern prototype had seventy large ones, and now every window was blazing with lights. (The Metropolis, p.43)

This type of costly mansion is also an example of the conspicuous consumption which characterises Sinclair's metropolis. They are necessary to the upper classes because they demonstrate the possession of wealth, and enhance their reputation. This point was also stressed by Veblen in The Theory of the Leisure Class:

The basis on which good repute in any highly industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength, and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods. (p.70)

As is the case in Sinclair's metropolis, many of the houses and public buildings in the Dreiserian city are expensive and reflect its abundant wealth. However, unlike the huge mansions described in Sinclair's novel, they do not appear grotesque and ungraceful. Although Dreiser's descriptions of them leave no doubt about their cost, it is rather their artistic architecture and their elegant features that Dreiser seems to emphasize. His description of one of these houses, which make the beauty and power of such residential quarters as the North Side and Michigan Avenue in Chicago, reflects the contrast with 'Castle Havens' and 'Black Forest' in The Metropolis:

Hurstwood's residence on the north side, near Lincoln Park was a brick building of a very popular type at that time, a three-story affair, with the first floor sunk a very little below the level of the street. It had a large bay window bulging out from the second

floor and was graced in front by a small grassy plot twenty five feet wide and ten feet deep. There was also a small rear yard, walled in by the fences of the neighbors and holding a stable where he kept his horse-and-trap. The latter faced upon an alley, which paralleled the street, in the rear of the houses. (Sister Carrie, p.80)

More than these elegant houses it is the cultural institutions and leisure places which constitute best the attraction of the Dreiserian city, and hold Carrie's dreams. They appeal to Sister Carrie because they house a variety of entertainments and are the focus of city life. Moreover many of these places which are reserved for the idle rich and their conspicuous way of life appear in Carrie's eyes the symbol of wealth and luxury she is shown as longing for. Their grace is further emphasized through Dreiser's descriptions of Carrie's response to them. She is so fascinated that "such childish fancies as she had had of fairy palaces and kingly quarters now came back".(p.115) As is the case with most of the things she sees in the city Carrie is also highly impressed by many of the performances she attends. Dreiser shows her coming into contact with that artistic field she often dreams of, and in which she is later to pursue her professional career and become famous. For as emerges from Dreiser's description New York is the place where all kinds of art flourish, and the land

where people from various parts of the country have the opportunity to express their artistic talents and establish their reputation.

Theatrical genius was represented by Augustine Daly, the Frohmans and Lester Walker. Literature and art had its kings in the persons of Howells, Z.G.A. Ward, John Lafarge. (Sister Carrie, p.304)

Dreiser's reference to the 'Dean of American Letters' illustrates the cultural reputation of New York. Howells was at that time an eminent literary figure, and "his move from Boston to New York in 1888 signalled a change in the relative cultural power of the two centers".³⁵

Like the cultural institutions, the green spaces contribute a great deal to the beauty and picturesqueness of the Dreiserian City. New York and Chicago, as emerges from Dreiser's descriptions, have pleasant parks which constitute an attraction for city dwellers. In the train leading them to Chicago Drouet advises Sister Carrie to visit, among other places, one of these parks:

"You want to see Lincoln Park" he said, "and Michigan Avenue. They are putting up great buildings there. It's a second New York, great. So much to see - theatres, crowds, fine houses. Oh you'll like that." (p.7)

In his essay, 'City Without Limits' (1977), Guy Szuberla has dealt with the significance of the green spaces in the Dreiserian city. By taking as example a description of a

Chicagoan park where Hurstwood is due to meet Carrie, he has showed that Dreiser's use of these places might have a double meaning which involves the pastoral ideal.³⁶ First, as he has suggested by pointing at "the green leaves of a lilac bush ... and the shade of this cool, green bush ..." which seem to be submerged by "the hum of surrounding city", Dreiser may refer to a lost pastoral ideal as a consequence of industrialization and the rise of the city. This is a plausible suggestion. Dreiser expresses more explicitly this idea, that is the threatening expansion of the city in another passage.

The city had grown so rapidly and extended its borders so far that the summer garden idea had been abandoned and the surrounding ground parcelled out into one story - store buildings which were largely vacant. (Sister Carrie, p.172)

Second, by describing the green parks Dreiser may want to attribute pastoral beauty to the city, and, therefore, suggest its magnificence and its paradisiac aspect. In addition to Szuberla's suggestions, Dreiser's use of the park seems to achieve yet another purpose. While it stresses the aesthetic beauty of the city, the park serves as a decor to Carrie's romance with Hurstwood, and like her rooms in Chicago and New York, it is a part of her sentimental world. It is in the middle of these green spaces that Hurstwood declares his love to Sister Carrie. And it is this scene which signals a new development in the relationship between on the one hand Sister Carrie and

Drouet, and on the other hand between Carrie and Hurstwood. After her meeting with Hurstwood in the park Carrie accepts his advances and starts to drift away from Drouet. Dreiser suggests clearly the change in Carrie's mind:

Temporarily, she gave little thought to Drouet, thinking only of the dignity and grace of her lover and of his consuming affection for her. On the first evening she did little but go over the details of the afternoon, always winding up at that delicious climax when she had confessed, by action, her too full sympathy for his lonely state.
(p.131)

The majority of Sinclair's descriptions in The Metropolis, like Dreiser's, emphasize the magical, the wealthy, and the glittering features of the city. However, Sinclair's and Dreiser's depictions are neither the result of the same perception of these aspects nor are there in order to achieve a similar purpose. If Upton Sinclair gives a fairy tale image of his metropolis, it is not so much because he wants to show its aesthetic beauty or emphasize its reputation as a magnetic place. On the contrary Sinclair describes it in such a way in order to show that it is only a small group of people who monopolise the wealth and opportunities of the city, and denounce the wide gap existing between the upper and lower classes. His attitude towards the metropolis is one of contempt rather than admiration because it favours one class at the expense of another. Unlike Sinclair, Dreiser responded enthus-

iastically to the beautiful city scenes and was, like his characters, fascinated by everything he saw. Dreiser's fascination in front of these scenes often equals that of a painter. The idea of Dreiser's artistic attitude towards the city is also expressed by B. Gelfant in The American City Novel (1954):

He was an art-lover before a beautiful work of art: he noticed and responded to the aesthetic elements of the urban scenes being as yet too naive to grasp their social implications.³⁷

It seems, however, that Dreiser grasped the social implications of certain urban scenes ambiguously. For if the city emerges from Dreiser's novels as a place of magic and wealth, it also appears as a land with "... the sharp and at the same time immense contrast ... between the dull and the shrewd, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant".³⁸ Hence although Dreiser and Sinclair responded differently to the glittering wealth of the city, they came to adopt in many ways a similar attitude towards its ills, even if each one of them denounced them in his own manner.

One of the significant examples which illustrates this identical position is their perception of the city, or city life, as a jungle. Such vision of the city is largely the result of the strong impact that the evolutionary theories of Darwin had on the development of American

society, and their adoption by American writers at the turn of the nineteenth century. Darwinism found a fertile soil in the United States because it was often used to justify the state of American society, and helped the expansion of its economic foundations. It was argued, for instance, that the discrepancies in the American society obeyed the law of natural selection which excluded equality between the species. Hence those who were at the bottom of the social ladder found themselves in such a situation because they proved unfit and were unable to survive the process of selection. Natural selection which insured the survival of the fittest was also substituted by those who stand for capitalism, especially the big businessmen, by industrial selection which brought out the fittest and best people in this field. That Darwin's theories were so enthusiastically applied to American society, and indeed to the human world, also results from "the view that man is just another animal, subject to all the natural struggles of animals for existence".³⁹ This view was even more emphasized by the use of a technique dear to the realist - naturalist writers, namely their likening of the human environment to the animal kingdom, or their reflection of animal behaviour in their descriptions of people's relations with each others.

As the title of his famous novel, The Jungle, may suggest Sinclair shows in this work that the milieu in which his heroes settle is a place of intense struggle for

survival. Before they set forth for their long journey, they are shown, in chapter two, longing for the New World, and convinced that America is the promised land where one can get prosperous and be free from any social restraint. When they reach their destinations they speedily realise that it is instead a tough world. Through the descriptions of the series of misfortunes which strike the Lithuanian family, Sinclair leaves no doubt about the ruthless and inhuman nature of their environment. He also emphasizes that his heroes are crushed because they prove unable to lift themselves up to the norms governing this milieu. With the beginning of industrialisation and the rise of capitalism, the American environment underwent profound changes and new rules for success appeared. One had to use corrupt practices, be ruthless, and not hesitate to crush other people, if need be, in order to achieve any result.

Apart from the whole story of this Lithuanian family which reflects the harshness of their environment, there are many other passages in The Jungle where Sinclair refers more explicitly to Chicago as a place of fierce struggle, and where relations between people are to say the least rough. In the following passage, for example, he shows that Jurgis's survival is always at stake:

He had to fight often in these days - to fight for a place near the factory gates, and now and again with gangs on the street. He found, for instance, that the business of carrying satchels for railroad

passengers was a pre-empted one. Whenever he essayed it, eight or ten men and boys would fall upon him and force him to run for his life.⁴⁰

Jurgis also had insights into the struggles for survival at various occasions. Another illustrative example is when Sinclair's hero and his friend Duane assault a man and rob him of his belongings.

Before long Jurgis would think no more of it than they did in the yards of knocking off out a bullock. "It's a case of us or the other fellow, and I say the other fellow everytime", he (Duane) observed. "Still" said Jurgis reflectively, "he never did us any harm". "He was doing it to somebody as hard as he could you can be sure of that;" said his friend. (The Jungle, p.302)

Jurgis, as his reply shows, is too naive to believe that things are achieved through brutal means, and too honest to get involved, at least without remorse, in immoral activities. However, one of his relatives, Marija, is intelligent enough to realise after her family's hardships the true nature of the environment in which they live, and to understand according to which rules it is governed. As she tells Jurgis to his great disappointment, "We were too ignorant - that was the trouble. We didn't stand any chance. If I'd known what I know now we'd have won out." (p.347)

The description of the city as a jungle is similar if not more apparent in Dreiser's novels. In most of his city novels, and particularly in Sister Carrie, The Financier, and The Titan, Dreiser emphasizes the ruthless characteristics of the metropolis in overt terms:

The surface might appear commonplace. Ordinary men of the state of Illinois going here and there ... Yet a jungle-like complexity was present, a dark, rank growth of horrific but avid life - life at the full, life knife in hand, life blazing with courage and dripping at the jaws with hunger.⁴¹

Not only does Dreiser point out the jungle-like features of his heroes' environment, but he often uses animal images in order to convey fully his vision of the city as a jungle. When Hurstwood moves with Sister Carrie to New York, Dreiser writes, as if anticipating the toughness of this milieu and his hero's difficulties to cope with it:

The sea was already full of whales. A common fish must needs disappear wholly from view, remain unseen. In other words Hurstwood was nothing. (Sister Carrie, p.305)

Here also Dreiser makes it clear that the battle is to the strong. Dreiser's use of animal images in his novels is abundant. In his essay, 'The Imagery of Dreiser's Novels', William L. Phillips has dealt extensively with this point. By taking various examples from Sister Carrie, The Financier, and The Titan, he showed that Dreiser often uses animal metaphors to refer to people's motives and

actions, and to draw a parallel between the human and the animal worlds. Dreiser emphasized so strongly the parallel that he has often exposed himself to criticism. In his essay, 'The Naturalism of Mr. Dreiser', for example, Stuart P. Sherman dismissed Dreiser precisely because of his elimination of "human motives and making animal instincts the supreme factors in human life".⁴² Although it contains a part of truth, Sherman's criticism is somewhat harsh. Dreiser's perception of the city and human life as a jungle, and his emphasis of their animal instincts, is certainly not groundless. Dreiser's experiences in the city and discovery of the evolutionary theories of Darwin and Spencer disillusioned him and "shattered his romantic image of the metropolis". As a consequence not only did Dreiser come to perceive the city as a jungle, but he also felt that urban "life was a jumble of meaningless, strange, and pathetic things".⁴³

Dreiser's pessimistic vision of the city is also clearly reflected in Hurstwood's failure to join the 'walled city' and his tragic ending. Hurstwood who enjoyed a high position in Chicago as a manager of Hanna and Hogg's and lived a luxurious life meant to lead a similar, if not a happier way of life in New York. Once he settles in his new environment Dreiser shows Hurstwood becoming speedily disillusioned; New York proves much less profitable to him than Chicago. He fails to conquer the high spheres of the city because it has already its

well-established millionaires and masters who jealously guard their privileges. As Hurstwood begins to drift he comes to realise that he stands no chance to reenter the 'walled city'.

More and more slowly the significance of the realm he had left began to be clear. It did not seem to be so wonderful to be in it when he was in it. It seemed very easy for anyone to get up there and have ample raiment and money to spend, but now that he was out of it, how far off it became. He began to see it as one sees a city with a wall about it. Men were posted at the gates - you could not get in. Those inside did not care to come out to see who you were. They were so merry inside there that all those outside were forgotten, and he was on the outside.
(p.339)

Dreiser's description of the 'walled city' and Hurstwood's longing for it recalls Bunyan's account of the salvation trip to the Celestial City that 'stood upon a mighty hill', in his Pilgrim's Progress (1684). Like Hurstwood, Ignorance in Bunyan's allegory is prevented "... by the men that lookt over the top of the Gate" from entering the city which "was builded of pearls and precious stones ..."44 Not only are the two characters kept away from the joys and beautiful sights of the golden city, but they are also doomed. Ignorance is carried away "through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the hill, and put him there. Then I saw that there was a way to Hell ..." (p.195) As for Hurstwood, in spite of his struggle, he cannot prevent

his downfall. His helplessness is reflected in the closing sentence of the novel, "'What's the use" he said wearily as he stretched himself to rest'.(p.499)

As is the case with Hurstwood, Sinclair's characters are also disappointed by city life. Jurgis offers again a good example, but Alan Montague also has an unpleasant experience. When he is about to leave his southern region for the north, Alan Montague who has "worked hard at his profession ... meant to work in New York and to win his way in the end". (The Metropolis, p.19) However when he arrives in New York Montague fails to fulfil his ambitions because in the milieu to which his brother introduces him work is one of the last things the idle rich bothered about. Once he decides to have his own way and starts exercising his profession, Alan Montague rapidly becomes the victim of various intrigues, and "... realized instantly that he was helpless ... here he was in the wolves' own country and he could do nothing". (The Metropolis, p.298) However, in spite of their difficulties, Sinclair's characters achieve in a way a victory over the city for, unlike Hurstwood, they do not let themselves be destroyed. Thanks to his discovery of socialism Jurgis decides to fight back the evils existing in American society; while Alan Montague who feels contemptuous towards city life and New York upper classes decides to return to his rural south.

What makes the image of the city appear even darker in the novels of Sinclair and Dreiser is both of these writers' representation of the socio-economic differences between people, and the vices characterising urban life. Sinclair and Dreiser are two of the American writers who excelled in the denunciation of the crude realities of American cities. This is not surprising as far as Sinclair, the socialist crusader, is concerned. As for Dreiser, he was a true social historian, and it would not have been an exaggeration if he had said like Balzac, whom he admired and whose love of the minute detail can be easily traceable in his novels, "je suis le secrétaire de la société".⁴⁵ Similarly it would be adequate to speak of the New York or the Chicago of Dreiser in the same manner that some critics spoke of 'Le Paris de Balzac'.⁴⁶ Hence as Balzac did for Paris, Dreiser also felt it his duty to report on how the poor and the rich lived in the American city. Dreiser's manner of depicting everything he saw with detachment is again reflected in his description of the discrepancies between the various social classes of his country. In Sister Carrie, for instance, Dreiser does not indulge in long and pitiable descriptions in order to show the catastrophic situation of the poor. He rather proceeds with a series of sharp and brief contrasts which lay bare the two extremes of the city, that is its luxurious wealth and its striking poverty. Most of the time, it is mainly by following Sister Carrie and Hurstwood that Dreiser

achieves these contrasts. Hence when she arrives in Chicago Sister Carrie can judge of the great socio-economic differences in this city through the glittering wealth of its streets and the dullness and bareness of her sister's flat.

Carrie found time to study the flat ... She felt the drag of a lean and narrow life. The walls of the rooms were discordantly papered. The floors were covered with matting and the hall with a thin rag carpet. One could see that the furniture was of that poor, hurriedly patched together quality which was then being sold by the installment houses ... Something about the place irritated her, she did not know what. She only knew that these things, to her, were dull and commonplace. (p.13)

Minnie's flat which is situated in "a part of West Van Buren Street", an area "inhabited by families of laborers, and clerks", is almost insignificant compared to the apartment Drouet secures for Carrie in Ogden place. Dreiser's description of Carrie's new residence shows clearly the contrast between the two places. Unlike Minnie's flat, Carrie's apartment is set in a pleasant area, "facing Union Park on the West Side". From "the best room which looked out upon the lawn", as Dreiser writes, Carrie has "a vista pleasant to contemplate". The rooms are "comfortably enough furnished". (p.88) The

detailed description of the interior of one of these rooms emphasizes even more the contrast with Minnie's poor furniture.

There was a good Brussels carpet on the floor, rich in dull red and lemon shades and representing large jardinières, filled with gorgeous impossible flowers. There was a large pier-glass mirror, between the two windows, fitted in when mirrors of that kind were exceedingly popular. A large, soft, green-plush-covered lounge occupied one corner, and several rocking chairs were set carelessly about. Some pictures, several rugs, a few small pieces of bric-a-brac, and the tale of contents is told. (p.88)

Not only does this decor reflect the material wealth of the city, but it also suggests the kind of comfort that Carrie often longs for. It is in such decor that Carrie feels a certain harmony with her milieu.

Dreiser sometimes reveals the crying inequalities between people by juxtaposing in the same passage the descriptions of two extreme situations. When Hurstwood starts to drift Dreiser emphasizes his poor state by showing him in the trolley-bus sitting next to two big businessmen, "two gentlemen sat down beside him on the same seat. They were rich and prosperous, two big mining millionaires from the West". (p.357) Towards the end of the novel, as the socio-economic situation of Hurstwood worsens Dreiser goes deeper in the treatment of the striking poverty characterising New York. Through the

description of Hurstwood's decline he gives an insight into the way of life of those homeless and deprived who wander all the day long in the streets of New York seeking a meal, or a refuge for the night. Dreiser heightens his dramatic picture by often depicting these people caught in a snowstorm, as if to suggest man's helplessness in face of external forces. However Dreiser's most poignant picture of New York's poverty is best reflected in his description of the bread line (where Hurstwood and other deprived end up begging for a loaf of bread) which contrasts deeply with the description of the city's glamour.

At eleven o'clock of another evening perhaps two weeks later, he (Hurstwood) was at the midnight offering of a loaf, waiting patiently. It had been an unfortunate day with him, but now he took his fate with a touch of philosophy. If he could secure no supper, or was hungry late in the evening, here was a place where he could come. A few minutes before twelve a great box of bread was pushed out and exactly on the hour a portly, round-faced German took position by it, calling 'ready'. The whole line at once moved forward, each taking his loaf in turn and going his separate way. On this occasion the ex-manager ate as he went, plodding the dark streets in silence to his bed. (p.491)

As Dreiser stated elsewhere the breadline was one of the aspects of New York's everyday life which appealed to him most. He also described this touching picture in The Color of a Great City. 'The Bread-Line', his most

interesting story in this piece of work, tells indeed about "the usual shabby figures, men of all ages, from fifteen or younger to seventy,"⁴⁷ who line everyday at twelve o'clock in front of a bakery in order to get a loaf of bread. Other stories in The Color of a Great City are of no less importance and illustrate vividly the difficulties and struggles of New York's lower classes. These are, among others, 'Christmas in the Tenements', 'The Bowery Mission', 'The Men in the Storm', 'The Pushcart Men', 'The Toilers of the Tenements', and 'Men in the dark'. It is worth mentioning that many of Dreiser's descriptions in Sister Carrie and The Color of a Great City are reminiscent of some of Jacob Riis's reports on the Bowery and the Lower East side of New York, in his famous book, How the Other Half Lives (1890).

One can draw, for example, a parallel between Dreiser's story 'The Toilers of the Tenements' and the report of Jacob Riis on 'The Sweaters of Jewtown'. Each of Dreiser and Riis describes in his story the poor working and living conditions of the sweaters. In these places, as Dreiser points out, "everything is work, in one form or another, from morning until night".⁴⁸ Jacob Riis states that "there is no such thing as a dinner hour; men and women eat while they work, and the 'day' is lengthened at both ends far into the night. Factory hands take their work with them at the close of the lawful day to eke out their scanty earnings by working overtime at home".⁴⁹ More

often than not the rooms where these workers lived with their families became themselves a kind of sweatshops. In order to earn a few more dollars and cover their everyday needs, not only had the sweaters to work overtime at home but also get the mother and the children "to help on the piece work that is taken into the rooms". As Dreiser also writes,

I know a chamber in this section where at a plain wooden bench or table, sits a middle-aged Hungarian and his wife, with a fifteen-year-old daughter, sewing ... Between them and upon a nearby chair are piled many pairs of trousers, all awaiting their labour. (The Color of a Great City, p.88)

It is also possible to draw certain similarities between Dreiser's story, 'The Men in the Storm', or his description of the breadline scene in Sister Carrie, and some of the accounts that Jacob Riis gave on New York's underworld, and the charity houses which received them.

In order to show the discrepancies between the rich and poor, Sinclair does not 'pile up' the misfortunes of the lower classes and describe their catastrophic conditions only, but, like Dreiser, he sometimes contrasts sharply the two extremes. In one of the passages in The Jungle, Jurgis, who loses his house and becomes a tramp, is shown in a huge and luxurious mansion with 'Master Freddie', a wealthy man. Such a contrast is again

reflected in The Metropolis. In order to get to one of the sumptuous residences Alan Montague and his brother have to cross first the tenement district.

They had to make a detour of a block, and they turned with a vicious sweep and plunged into the very heart of the tenement district. Narrow, filthy streets, with huge, cañon-like blocks of buildings covered with rusty iron fire-escapes and decorated with soap-boxes and pails and laundry and babies; narrow stoops crowded with playing children; grocery-shops, clothing shops, saloons; and a maze of placards and signs in English and German and Yiddish. (p.32)

Like some of Dreiser's descriptions in The Color of a Great City, the reportorial style in this passage also recalls some of the investigations made by Jacob Riis and, even the photographs he took in the Lower East side of New York. Finally because of their opposite subject matter, The Jungle and The Metropolis offer a good example of Sinclair's denunciation of the socio-economic inequalities in American society, through the sharp contrast of the conditions of the lower and upper classes.

To conclude let us sum up briefly the main points which emerge from our study of Dreiser's and Sinclair's treatment of the American city. First as we have seen, the rise of the city in America, like many other events at the turn of the nineteenth century, was an unprecedented phenomenon. Hence, like some of these events, it also caught the attention of many writers. The treatment of the

city appears much more dominant in the novels of Dreiser than in Sinclair's. Almost in all his novels Dreiser gives a wide picture of Chicago and New York. It is precisely these two cities which Upton Sinclair also deals with in The Jungle and The Metropolis. However, his study of them is rather superficial and incomplete, or in any case much less detailed than Dreiser's. Two reasons may be given to explain this difference. First, Dreiser had a greater knowledge of Chicago and New York than Sinclair. Dreiser's acquaintance with these two cities and his use of their socio-economic background emerges clearly in his novels. Second, Dreiser's detachment and his acute sense of observation allowed him to analyse carefully various aspects which characterised the rise of the city and depict its picturesqueness and splendour. Upton Sinclair, instead, was much more concerned with denouncing the negative features of the metropolis which he obviously regarded as another evil consequence of rising capitalism. Hence, unlike Dreiser who responded with enthusiasm to certain urban scenes, Upton Sinclair (like his hero Montague) was rather sceptical about everything he saw in the city, even its luxurious wealth and glamour. In spite of these differences both Dreiser and Sinclair came to perceive the city as a jungle and denounce the socio-economic discrepancies characterising it, even if (because of their 'commitment' or lack of it) each one of them achieved this task in his own manner.

I

As was the case with immigration and the growth of the cities, the emergence of the business tycoon was another important phenomenon of the 1880s and the 1890s, and attracted the attention of a great number of American writers. That the business tycoon appeared as a potential subject of treatment in the American novel is emphasized by Henry Nash Smith in his essay, 'The Search for a Capitalist Hero: Businessmen in American Fiction'.

The businessman's rapidly growing importance in the actual world suggested to novelists who were influenced by the doctrines of literary realism that he should be given a corresponding position in the novel.¹

Given the impact of the businessman on the development of the American economy, the subject of study in the present chapter will be the treatment of the business tycoons in the novels of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair. First it is important to have an idea about the American business tycoon, that is to analyse why and how he became a dominant figure in American life, and managed to gain a place in American fiction.

In the pre-Civil War era American industry was constituted by small and individually owned manufactures. Business was achieved on a reduced scale and the work force was limited in number. It often consisted of the owner

and two or three assistants. At the time the businessman was far from being a prominent figure, and was hardly regarded as somebody who held in his hands the country's destiny. Neither was he a privileged personage. He worked within the well-defined business climate of free competition and sought to make good profits from his business.²

The Civil War transformed the structures of American industry. In the years following the conflict between the North and the South, the firms expanded and became more complex. Thanks to the new innovations they also increased production and became more efficient. With the transformed structures of American economy the image of the businessman also changed. In his book, The Economic Transformation of America (1977), Robert L. Heilbroner has suggested that some American businessmen were 'inventors, innovators or merchandising pioneers'.³ Thomas Alva Edison, for example, managed to market his inventions through various companies and build a fortune. Gustavus Swift became a prominent businessman when 'he combined the ice-cooled railway car with the ice-cooled warehouse to create the first national meat-packing company in 1885'.⁴ Using his skills James Buchanan Duke reorganized the structure of the cigarette factory in which he was partner, and made it much more efficient. Moreover, he formed the American tobacco company which set its monopoly on the cigarette market by gathering together various small producers.

However, what brought the American business tycoon to prominence and attracted people's interest in this personage is that group of financiers and industrialists who were born before the Civil War and came to maturity in the 1880s, and who revolutionized the American economy. The story of this group of people and their influence on the development of the American economy is indeed fascinating and constitutes an important phase in America's economic history. Many of these people started at the bottom of the social ladder. They came very often from poor families and lacked a college education. However, thanks to the huge opportunities available in the New World (especially in the 1870s and the early 1880s) and their daring and adventurous temperament, they managed successfully to rise to wealth and fame. Their careers illustrate to a large extent the Horatio Alger myth. The following account of Andrew Carnegie's prodigious rise gives an idea about how such people as J.D. Rockefeller, Jay Gould, and Cornelius Vanderbilt, came to dominate American business life and create a new image of the business tycoon.

Given the fact that Andrew Carnegie was born in Scotland and emigrated with his family to the United States in 1848 his example is even more significant, since it emphasizes to some extent the belief, often cherished by immigrants, that America is the land of opportunities and where people could lead a luxurious life. Carnegie

started his career in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, as a bobbin boy in a cotton factory at \$1.20 a week, and devoted his spare time to educating himself in a library for working boys.⁵ With the advent of the telegraph in Pittsburgh he became a messenger boy and taught himself to be an operator. In Pittsburgh Carnegie met Thomas A. Scott, superintendent of the Pittsburgh division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, who was to play an important role in the young man's career. Carnegie's rise parallels indeed the impressive ascension of Scott who, after holding various high jobs, ended up as an assistant secretary of war. As Thomas Scott moved from one job to another Andrew Carnegie was either appointed to replace him or moved with his protector to a new branch of work in order to assist him. Hence in 1853 Carnegie became private secretary and personal telegrapher to A. Scott, and succeeded him as a superintendent of the Western division when he moved to the Vice-Presidency of the Pennsylvania Railroad. These various jobs brought large sums of money to Andrew Carnegie which he invested in the iron industry and the booming railroads. During a visit to England Carnegie met Sir Henry Bessemer who initiated him into the workings of the Bessemer process. Carnegie was quick enough to grasp the advantages of the new system. As soon as he returned to the United States, and in spite of the depression of 1873, he invested his capital in the construction of a steel company which was to use the Bessemer converter. By

taking the risk of using the new process Carnegie gained a great advantage over his competitors and was successful. To give but two examples, in 1900 The Carnegie Steel Company had a record-making profit of 40 million dollars. In 1901 when Carnegie retired he sold his holdings to the Morgan group for 221 million dollars.

Although Carnegie and his fellow business tycoons showed great skills and made enormous efforts to organise America's economy, their successful achievements were not always the result of their hard and honest work. Other factors have also contributed to the rise of the business tycoon. The post-Civil War years were an era of typical capitalist boom. The huge mineral resources of America were exploited for the first time on a large scale, while the laissez-faire policy and the government's financial help and land concessions (i.e. to the railroad barons) encouraged the development of big business projects. Moreover, if the American business tycoon managed to revolutionise his country's economy and become the dominant figure in the United States, it was because he often used illegal means and acted ruthlessly in order to reach his aim. Rockefeller's business career, and especially the methods used by this Clevelander oilman to build the Standard Oil Company, are a vivid illustration of the business tycoon's malpractices in the Gilded Age.⁶

The Standard Oil Company grew so powerful that it came to control the oil trade not only in the U.S., but also in Europe and the Far East. That Rockefeller managed to establish a monopoly on the oil trade and transform the small business affair he started with Samuel Andrews into such a big company was mainly the result of his alliance with the railroads. Thanks to the various agreements which he concluded with the railway magnates, Rockefeller was able to ruin his rivals. One of the most important contracts which gave him an indisputable supremacy over his competitors was that which he made with the Pennsylvania Railroad. The contract stipulated that the Pennsylvania Railroad agreed 'to double the freight on oil to everybody, but to repay the Standard one dollar for every barrel of oil it shipped, and one dollar for every barrel any of its competitors shipped'.⁷ Furthermore Rockefeller strengthened his position when he managed to get important concessions from Vanderbilt. The latter agreed to transport free of charge Rockefeller's crude oil from the wells in Pennsylvania to the refineries in Cleveland and pay back the Standard, as did other railroad companies, 'ten per cent of its freight bills'. Vanderbilt made so many concessions to Rockefeller that 'when he was doing the business for other shippers at \$1.40 and \$1.25 a barrel, he charged the Standard only eighty and eighty-one cents and this was afterwards reduced to sixty cents a barrel'.⁸ Moreover he allowed Rockefeller to take over a large part

of his oil cars and terminal facilities. As a consequence of these alliances, many oil and railroad companies (such as the Octave Oil Company, The Titusville refiners, the Baltimore and Ohio) which could not face Rockefeller's competition, went bankrupt and had to sell out to the Standard. Similarly, in order to promote the Standard Oil, Rockefeller made a close alliance with politicians. He often gave his financial support to insure the election of certain candidates to Congress, or even to the American presidency on the understanding that they would defend his interests in the government. To give but one example, in their presidential campaigns, it was thanks to the financial support of the Standard Oil and the electoral votes of its employees that James Garfield and Benjamin Harrison won the doubtful states of Pennsylvania and Indiana respectively.⁹ Political corruption was indeed one of the frequent means used by American business tycoons to carry out their plans and build their fortunes.

The rise of American business tycoons in the Gilded Age, and especially their accumulation of wealth through immoral means, speedily brought sharp criticism. The case of Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Company is again significant. Public opinion was in uproar against the Standard Oil and urged the government to take measures in order to stop a practice which was killing the spirit of free competition. In face of these public protests, the government took certain measures such as the Interstate

Commerce Act in 1887 and the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890, to regulate trade and commerce and restrain the formation of trusts. Other measures were also taken against the Standard Oil itself. In 1892 the Ohio courts ordered the dissolution of the Standard trust - a measure which caused Rockefeller to move to New Jersey where he built his trust once again. The Standard Oil came under an even sharper criticism when Ida Tarbell, one of the journalist muckrakers, published her book, The History of the Standard Oil Company (1904). In 1906 the government launched a court action against the Standard Oil, and in 1911 the Supreme Court ordered its dissolution.¹⁰

However, some of the robber barons' activities have been praised. In The Enterprising Americans (1963), John Chamberlain, for example, gives a favourable opinion about Vanderbilt and the robber barons.

But on one thing there can be no dispute: the public was served by the new trains on the Commodore's New York-Chicago tracks. If Cornelius was a robber baron, the country needed more like him. Old 'Corneel' may have watered the Central's stock. But as fast as he watered it he solidified it - and the worst that can be said about him is that he was a shrewd capitalizer of future earnings.¹¹

Many other people were enthusiastic about the adventurous enterprises of the robber barons, and often justified their malpractices. One of the eager defenders of the American businessman was a certain Bishop Laurence. According to

him the business tycoon's activities were in accordance with God's teachings, and the captain of industry was only performing his duty of exploiting the huge opportunities given by the Lord. This was indeed, as the bishop suggested, 'his play, his exercise, his divine mission'.¹² Moreover, if the big businessmen managed to gather large sums of money it was because they did according to the principles of the puritan ethic and were frugal, industrious, and hard workers. Thus God could not but reward them for their efforts. Bishop Laurence's arguments in favour of the robber barons are not surprising. As was the case with politicians, the big businessmen of the Gilded Age were 'in league' with the religious authorities of their country. Some of them attended Sunday services and brought their financial help to their parishes - a help which was often praised by the beneficiaries and insured the robber barons valuable support.

Similarly, social Darwinism became increasingly an apology for the business tycoons' accumulation of wealth and their malpractices. By applying Darwinism to the business field many people perceived the domination of American economic life by the robber barons as the result of a natural process. Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and their fellow business tycoons were regarded as the survivors of a fierce competitive struggle and therefore proved the

fittest people to direct American business life.¹³ In order to justify the robber barons' monopolising tendencies, Andrew Carnegie also used a Darwinian terminology.

While the law (of competition) may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department.¹⁴

A variety of other arguments were also put forward in defence of the business tycoon. Some people argued, for instance, that if there were socio-economic differences between American citizens, those to be blamed were not the robber barons but the poor themselves. The United States, according to these people, offered huge opportunities to all citizens, and if some of them failed to exploit these opportunities they only had themselves to blame. Their poverty, it was also argued, was a result of their laziness, their alcoholism, and their viciousness - aspects which were incompatible with American values, and which could not lead to prosperity. Hence as Carnegie put it, 'it were better for mankind that the millions of the rich were thrown into the sea than so spent as to encourage the slothful, the drunken, the unworthy'.¹⁵

Today the debate about the robber baron remains as controversial as ever. The divergence is summed up in the following terms by John Tipple:

Though some recognised that the big businessman in pursuing private ends had served national prosperity, the majority felt that he had taken

extravagant profits entirely
out of proportions to the
economic services.¹⁶

II

If the debate between historians on the business tycoon and his activities in the Gilded Age is still characterised by a certain disagreement, the discussion between critics on how the American writer depicted him in his novels is no less controversial. The division between these critics is best reflected in the positions held respectively by John Chamberlain and Kenneth S. Lynn. The debate focuses mainly on whether or not the American writer gave a sympathetic picture of the businessman. In his essay, 'The Businessman in Fiction', which appeared in Fortune in 1948, John Chamberlain, for example, has suggested that the American writer gives rather a dark picture of the industrial magnate. His thesis is clearly expressed in the subtitle of his essay, 'The American Novelist Continues To Regard Him (The Businessman) As A Villainous Creature'.¹⁷ John Chamberlain comes to such a conclusion after analysing a series of business novels produced between 1884 and 1948.

However, Chamberlain's findings were strongly challenged by Kenneth S. Lynn in his essay, 'Authors in Search of the Businessman' (1956). Unlike Chamberlain, Lynn demonstrates in his essay that 'our contemporary literature contains a growing gallery of sympathetic

business portraits'.¹⁸ To some extent Lynn agrees with Chamberlain that the American businessman was darkly depicted by a few American writers. He even illustrates this point with some of the novels used by John Chamberlain in his analysis such as Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt (1922), Frederic Wakeman's The Hucksters (1946), and Samuel Hopkins Adams' Plunder (1948). Nevertheless Kenneth S. Lynn rejects strongly Chamberlain's final conclusion. As he put it,

... Chamberlain's lament that the businessman was still being treated with universal hostility was far from accurate even in 1948 when it was written - and it has become still less valid with the passage of the time.¹⁹

Whether or not the businessman had a favourable audience among American writers is, as Kenneth S. Lynn suggested, 'an unrewarding occupation'. However, a word must be said about Chamberlain's and Lynn's analysis and their conclusions. John Chamberlain may have to his credit the fact that his investigation covers somehow a large period, that is from 1884 to 1948. Moreover his conclusion can be also backed by Henry N. Smith's findings in his analysis of the same subject. Like Chamberlain H.N. Smith has suggested that in general the businessman had a 'bad press' among American writers.

Yet in imaginative literature he (the businessman) has on the whole fared badly. Few major writers have concerned themselves with the actual operation of the business

system, and when businessmen appear in novels, they are often treated with hostility or derision.²⁰

However, the main criticism is directed against the novels Chamberlain includes in his study. Chamberlain selected about forty novels but he did not mention in his essay on what basis he had chosen those works which are far from being the best representatives of the American business novel. There is, for instance, no reference to such works as Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889), Frank Norris' The Octopus (1901) and The Pit (1903), and Dreiser's 'Trilogy of Desire' which focused on the subject of the business tycoon and which could have influenced his final conclusion. Moreover the works Chamberlain had chosen for his investigation and the way he had analysed them seem rather to suggest that he wanted to prove the thesis that the businessman came to be represented as a villain in American fiction rather than to find out how accurate, for instance, the American writer's depiction of the businessman was.

Kenneth S. Lynn concluded differently because he based his analysis on a number of novels a great part of which were not included in Chamberlain's list, and which were produced during somehow a different period, that is the 1940s and the 1950s. This is indeed a significant difference since,

Most of the new generation of novelists who began to write in the 1940s and early 1950s have approached the businessman in a

spirit which is quite different
from that of the depression
authors.²¹

Lynn's rejection of Chamberlain's findings as being 'far from accurate ... and less valid with the passage of time', is somehow an off-hand conclusion since it does not take into consideration the time factor and the socio-economic and historical context in which the novels selected by Chamberlain were produced. The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (the period in which most of these novels were published) were characterised by the rise and strengthening of American capitalism. It was an era which saw the realisation of huge business projects and brought the business tycoon to prominence. However it was also a time of many social upheavals and when public reaction against the wealthy robber barons was strong. The Wall Street Crash in 1929 showed the vulnerability of the American economic system once again and increased the feeling of uneasiness.

However, in the 1950s and the 1960s (the period in which the novels analysed by Kenneth S. Lynn were produced) the economic climate that characterised the United States and the public attitude towards the business tycoon have changed favourably. The depression of the 1930s and the difficult World War years gave place to a tremendous economic growth in the post-war era and a palpable improvement in people's economic conditions. As one

critic put it, 'to use the cliché that was soon to be in everyone's mouth, the "image" of business was shifting from nefarious to good'.²² Various indications reflected the economic growth of the time. In 1971, for example, the G.N.P. per capita was six times higher than in 1929. Family incomes rose sharply; between 1946 and 1967 'families with incomes of over \$4,000 multiplied from 50 per cent to 67 per cent of all the families in the country'.²³ A real revolution in electronics was happening; 'In 1939 factory sales of electronic equipment of all kinds amounted to less than \$400 million; in 1960 the figure reached \$10 billion, to which \$5 billion more would have to be added to account for broadcasting revenues, servicing, and distribution'.²⁴ Examples of this kind can be repeated at a great length.

What might have influenced, or might explain, Lynn's conclusion is also the fact that, as he writes, 'many of the current crop of sympathetic business novels are in fact the works of men who have been, or who still are businessmen'.²⁵ Kenneth S. Lynn does not, however, limit himself to demonstrating that the American writer was sympathetic towards the business tycoon. According to him 'the significant question is whether he (the businessman) has ever really been dealt with at all in our literature.'²⁶ This is indeed an important question since it leads Kenneth S. Lynn to place his analysis in the context of realism. He shows, for instance, that most of the writers in the realist tradition have failed to deal with the business

tycoon as such. Hence the title of his essay, 'Authors in Search of the Businessman'. Two of the major examples he gives to illustrate his suggestion are Howells and Dreiser. As he suggests, in The Rise Silas Lapham (1885) Howells 'gave up a story about paint for a story about ladies and children. Thus the business novel became a novel of manners and the businessman, as businessman vanished from sight.'²⁷ Howells, according to Kenneth S. Lynn, transforms his novel because he needed to remain faithful to his critical principles, that is in order to deal with 'reality' and tell the truth the novelist must have an experience of his subject. Since Howells was fundamentally outside the business milieu, he found it easier to describe American middle class social manners, a subject in which he indeed excelled.

Concerning Dreiser's 'The Trilogy of Desire', Kenneth S. Lynn writes, 'It is the defiant Cowperwood's attempt to be an American superman, not an American businessman, which is the subject of The Titan.'²⁸ He is right to suggest that the idea of the superman constitutes the focus of 'The Trilogy of Desire'; however, it is only through the description of Cowperwood's business activities, and especially his ability to realise huge business projects successfully that Dreiser emphasizes such an idea. Dreiser's description of his hero's activities leave no doubt about The Financier and The Titan as business novels, and Cowperwood as a representative of the typical American

business tycoon. The fact is that Dreiser modelled his hero on one of the prominent American business magnates, that is the street car baron Charles Tyson Yerkes.

III

The background of 'The Trilogy of Desire' has been dealt with in many works. The most notable is Philip L. Gerber's essay, 'Dreiser's Financier: A Genesis' (1971)²⁹ which gives a detailed account of where and how Dreiser came to gather the material of his trilogy. In addition, it also gives an insight into the life of Charles Tyson Yerkes, Dreiser's prototype. F.O. Matthiessen and Richard Lehan also dealt extensively with Dreiser's interest in the business tycoon in their critical studies of the writer.³⁰

As emerges from these works, Dreiser planned his 'Trilogy of Desire' long before the first book, The Financier, was published in 1912. Dreiser's journalistic career in Chicago had brought him face to face with one of the most important characteristics of the city at the time, mainly its growing economic development. Such contacts with the new economic realities of America spurred Dreiser's interests and provided him with valuable material to put in a novel form. Dreiser himself expresses his reaction to these economic changes in the following lines:

The spirit of America at that time was so remarkable. It was just entering on that vast, splendid, most lawless and most savage period in which the great financiers, now nearly all dead, were plotting and

conniving the enslavement of
the people and belaboring each
other for power.³¹

That the idea of writing 'The Trilogy of Desire' was looming large in Dreiser's mind, even before Jennie Gerhardt (1911) was published, is also indicated by the fact that in 1905 Dreiser was already gathering further information about the business milieu and the business tycoons. On February 4, 1906, a few days after the death of Charles Tyson Yerkes, Dreiser came across an editorial in the New York World entitled, 'The Materials of a Great Novel'. The editorial gave a resume of the streetcar magnate's life and his activities, and suggested that this would make interesting subject matter for the American writer. Hence it is highly likely, as P.L. Gerber also suggested, that this editorial determined Dreiser's decision to write a series of business novels and to model his character on Charles Tyson Yerkes.

The reason why Dreiser had chosen Yerkes as the prototype for his financier is also discussed in some of the works which dealt with 'The Trilogy of Desire'. Dreiser himself had been asked this question and had been reported to have said that 'he had looked into the careers of twenty American capitalists and that Yerkes was the most interesting of them.'³² Charles T. Yerkes was 'the most interesting' for various reasons. First he was at the origin of the transport revolution in Chicago and New York. Moreover, during his stay in Chicago Dreiser could not have

failed to have heard about Yerkes, since his subversive activities very often made the headlines of the City's papers. In his spare time Dreiser used to walk on Michigan Avenue, admiring the luxurious houses of the nouveaux riches, and especially Yerkes' \$200,000 mansion which set him 'to riotous dreaming'.³³ Dreiser's preference for Yerkes was also determined by personal reasons. As P.L. Gerber and Richard Lehan pointed out, Dreiser and Yerkes had various characteristics in common, especially 'the same passion for success, inspired by the same "chemisms".'³⁴ Dreiser's deep interest in Yerkes' career is easily traceable in 'The Trilogy of Desire'. Not only did Dreiser use the streetcars magnate as a springboard for the creation of Cowperwood but his hero is largely based on Charles Tyso on Yerkes.

The lobster-squid episode which occurs at the beginning of The Financier embodies to a great extent the naturalism characterising 'The Trilogy of Desire'. It also shows that Dreiser places Frank Cowperwood's rise mostly in a naturalist context. This episode which Cowperwood witnesses in his youth has a strong impact on him and provides him with the first insights into the process of life. If his parents remain indifferent to the lobster-squid fight, Cowperwood instead,

For days and weeks ... thought of this and of the life he was tossed into, for he was already pondering on what he should be in this world, and how he should get along.³⁵

One of the immediate consequences of such an experience is that it sets the young hero into thinking. As Dreiser writes, it 'stayed with (Cowperwood) all his life and cleared things up considerably intellectually'.(p.9) Another effect of the lobster-squid episode is that it gives Cowperwood a grim view of life and fills him with a certain fear. Cowperwood realises that his world is to say the least unsafe, and that one has to be in constant alert and fight for his self-preservation. Such fears are further strengthened when Cowperwood enters the jungle-like business milieu. Hence the importance of this episode also lies in the fact that it helps Cowperwood in his business career; it is an incentive for him to overcome his obstacles and insure his survival as a financier.

Because it has a strong impact on Cowperwood and determines to a large extent the course of his actions, the lobster-squid episode acquired great importance and became the focus of many critics who dealt with Cowperwood's business career. It also led critics to explain Cowperwood's rise solely in a naturalistic context, and overemphasize the naturalism of 'The Trilogy of Desire'. However, in spite of its occurrence at the beginning of the novel and its role in determining Cowperwood's 'philosophy of life', the importance of this event has been somehow overstressed. Cowperwood's activities and his rise to power cannot be understood in a naturalistic context only. Unlike Sister Carrie, Hurstwood, and Jennie Gerhardt, Frank

Cowperwood is never presented, for example, as a helpless character, and his fate is not decided by the combination of external forces. Human will in the novels composing 'The Trilogy of Desire' finds an important place, and prevents a helpless and total submission of the hero to the prevailing conditions. Charles C. Walcutt has indeed stressed this point. As he wrote in 'The Three Stages of Theodore Dreiser's Naturalism' (1940), 'what distinguishes The Financier and The Titan from the two previous novels (Sister Carrie and Jennie Gerhardt) is ... the different weight given in them to the human factor in Dreiser's equation of change.'³⁶

That Dreiser gives importance to factors other than the naturalistic elements in 'The Trilogy of Desire', has been also suggested by Roger Asselineau. First, in his essay 'Theodore Dreiser's Transcendentalism' (1961), Asselineau dismisses the belief that Dreiser was a naturalistic novelist as 'a hasty conclusion', and demonstrates instead that Dreiser 'was a transcendentalist first and foremost.'³⁷ It is certainly wrong to deny Dreiser's naturalistic vocation. The naturalism of Dreiser is easily traceable in his novels, and it is hardly a rash conclusion if Dreiser is seen today as the spokesman of the American naturalist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, Asselineau's suggestion that Dreiser was a transcendentalist (or that he was inspired by transcendentalist principles) is by no means groundless.

Asselineau demonstrates Dreiser's transcendentalism by analysing a collection of poems entitled Moods which Dreiser had probably written between 1914 and 1926. Asselineau also traces some of Dreiser's affinities with the transcendentalists by referring briefly to Sister Carrie, An American Tragedy, and especially The Financier and The Titan. As far as the latter novels are concerned, Asselineau suggests for instance that Dreiser's creation of Cowperwood is the proof that 'like Emerson, he believed in "representative men"'.⁴⁰ This is indeed a crucial suggestion, since we shall demonstrate in the following that in addition to the naturalistic elements, Dreiser's desire to show Cowperwood as a promethean figure has to a large extent its origins in the Emersonian principles. Many of Dreiser's descriptions of Cowperwood's qualities and his prodigious rise can be matched with some of the passages in Emerson's two major essays, 'Self-Reliance' and 'Napoleon; or, the Man of the World'.

In his essay on Napoleon Emerson shows the leading qualities of the French emperor and stresses his prophetic stature in the eyes of the new mercantile and entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. As he suggests,

Paris and London and New York,
the spirit of Commerce, of
money and material power, were
also to have their prophet; and
Bonaparte was qualified and
sent.³⁹

Hence Napoleon came in a way with a divine mission. Dreiser also emphasizes at the beginning of The Financier that his hero belongs to that group of people whose destiny is to lead others.

Frank Cowperwood, even at ten, was a natural born leader ... From the very start of his life, he wanted to know about economics and politics. They (Cowperwood's brothers) looked up to Frank from the first as a master, and what he had to say was listened to eagerly.(p.9)

Both Emerson and Dreiser point to Nature's hand in shaping their heroes' destinies. Emerson states, for instance, that 'Nature must have far the greatest share in every success, andso in his (Napoleon's)' (p.329); while Dreiser suggests that Cowperwood 'was a natural born leader ...' and that 'Fate seemed to have his personal welfare in charge'.⁴⁰ Yet while suggesting the importance of natural factors, Dreiser and Emerson also make it clear that the two heroes owe their rise to their own determination and 'savoir-faire'. Although 'he respected the power of nature and fortune' Napoleon, as Emerson writes, 'ascribed to it his superiority instead of valuing himself, like inferior men, on his opinionativeness, and waging war with nature.'(p.329) Cowperwood becomes speedily aware of his great abilities and is determined to play a leading role. Dreiser's description of his state of mind in the following passage is very illustrative.

He knew he wasn't going to stay there long, even in spite of this gift and promise of

salary. They were grateful, of course; but why shouldn't they be? He was efficient, he knew that; under him things moved smoothly. It never occurred to him that he belonged in the realm of clerkdom. These people were the kind of beings who ought to work for him, and who would. (The Financier, p.35)

As emerges from this passage, young Cowperwood shows strong qualities already. He is self-confident and believes in his ability to rise. Cowperwood's keen determination is reflected in the fact that having set for himself ambitious dreams 'he could but ill brook opposition of any kind' (The Titan, p.197), and mostly in his favourite motto 'I satisfy myself' (passim). This motto which constitutes Cowperwood's line of conduct also shows Dreiser's emphasis on, and belief in, the individual. It is an idea which Dreiser may have drawn from Emerson who dealt with it at a great length in his essay, 'Self-Reliance', and which can be summed up in his central statement, 'whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist.' (p.141)⁴¹ Most of Cowperwood's activities in 'The Trilogy of Desire' are in accordance with this statement which encourages individual independence and private enterprise. Cowperwood, for instance, is self-reliant. He gradually emerges from that powerful group of business tycoons of the Butlers and the Mollenhauers, and builds his own business empire. Cowperwood manages to rise above his competitors because once he enters their milieu and learns their

business rules, he does not abide by them. Because he wants to be his own master Cowperwood uses instead his new connections to further his own interests and ensure his independence. What makes Cowperwood's titanic qualities is Dreiser's emphasis on his hero's ability to take adventurous decisions and pioneer large-scale business projects successfully. It would seem at first sight that there is a conflict between Cowperwood's Emersonian will and Naturalist fate. However, Emersonian will and the idea of the superman which Dreiser wants to endow his hero with constitute, as C.C.Walcut has suggested, another stage in the development of Dreiser's naturalism. As he put it,

In the second stage of his development Dreiser added another element to the two main ideas which we have described as constituting the first phase of his naturalism. That was the idea of the superman. When one had found that life was meaningless and morals absurdly inadequate, the next step was to conclude that the only good lay in exercising one's will to power.⁴²

Dreiser also solves this seeming conflict by striking a certain balance or by establishing an equation between the two components. When showing, for example, Cowperwood exercising his will to power, he also puts in evidence the weaknesses and helplessness of his hero's competitors. Even Cowperwood's power is sometimes counterbalanced by temporary defeats. At the end of The Titan when

Cowperwood fails to get the fifty-years franchise for his streetcar property, Dreiser comments upon his hero's career and suggests by the same token the necessity of a balance.

Rushing like a great comet to zenith, his path a blazing trail, Cowperwood did for the hour illuminate the terrors and wonders of individuality. But for him also the eternal equation - the pathos of the discovery that even giants are but pigmies, and that an ultimate balance must be struck. (The Titan, p.551)

Throughout 'The Trilogy of Desire' Dreiser shows Cowperwood moving from one business success to another. Dreiser's detailed descriptions of these business conquests emphasize Cowperwood's promethean figure and convey the image of Nietzsche's superman. Even when Cowperwood rises to fame and power he keeps on pursuing new conquests, in spite of the strong opposition and risks he meets. As Dreiser shows, Cowperwood's business successes become a kind of necessity for him because they appear as a means to insure his survival in the business milieu. As Dreiser also suggests it is mainly the ruthless nature of this milieu which imposes such a necessity on Cowperwood. Through his comparisons with the animal world Dreiser often presents the business circle as a veritable jungle. He writes for instance about the stock brokers, 'they were all hawks watching for an opportunity to snatch their prey from under the very claws of their opponents.' (The Financier, p.48) Once again a parallel may be drawn between

Cowperwood and Napoleon as Emerson described him in his essay. Napoleon's military conquests were necessary for him because as he put it, 'My power would fall, were I not to support it by new achievements. Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me.' (p.333)

One of the crucial ideas that Emerson also suggests in 'Self-Reliance' is that nonconformism brings the individual in conflict with his society. 'Society everywhere,' he writes, 'is in conspiracy against the manhood of everyone of its members (p.141)... For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure.' (p.144) As a nonconformist Cowperwood, as Dreiser shows, is a vivid illustration of Emerson's statement. First Cowperwood's business successes and his meteoric rise provoke anger and jealousy among the established businessmen. Because they see their interest threatened by Cowperwood these business tycoons react by joining their forces to bring him down. Almost in every business project he undertakes Cowperwood meets strong opposition from his competitors or the local authorities. Dreiser shows, for instance, that Cowperwood's downfall at the end of The Financier, after the embezzlement of the city's public funds, is provoked by some of the powerful business tycoons, such as Butler and Mollenhauer, who refuse to help him and conspire instead to send him to jail.

Yet if Cowperwood is brought down at the close of The Financier, and if he becomes the subject of harsh attacks, it is hardly for his business activities. Rather Dreiser attributes Cowperwood's difficulties to his seduction of many women. As has been also suggested, 'Dreiser makes it quite clear that Cowperwood's sexual adventures are the main cause of the growth of opposition to him.'⁴³ Hence in 'The Trilogy of Desire', as is the case in Sister Carrie and Jennie Gerhardt, Dreiser also emphasizes the restraining effects of the social conventions. In order to satisfy himself Cowperwood follows his nature and gives vent to his desires. However, some of his leanings are incompatible with the moral values which govern the genteel tradition, and Cowperwood finds no alternative but to defy these values. Thus he incurs the punishment of his environment and submits, in spite of his strength, to the harshness of its social conventions. In attributing Cowperwood's fall mostly to his transgression of the sexual laws Dreiser wants to put in evidence the parochialism of the moral conventions of his country and criticise them. Dreiser deplores mainly the fact that the social conventions are made in such a way as to restrain people's actions and repress their natural leanings. His reaction may be explained by Emerson's assumption that,

No law can be sacred to me but
that of my nature. Good and
bad are but names very readily
transferable to that or this;

the only right is what is after
my constitution; the only wrong
what is against it.(p.141)

But if Dreiser advocated such a view this means that he also accepted individual anarchism and the kind of chaotic situation which characterised American society. It also means that Dreiser justified the ways by which strength survives and rises to fame, and weakness is crushed. This is not however the case, for Dreiser often reacted against such conditions and criticised them in his novels. Dreiser's support of this view shows rather the contradictions he fell in when basing a philosophy on the natural.

In 'The Trilogy of Desire' Dreiser gives detailed descriptions of Cowperwood's business world and its immoral activities. Cowperwood, for instance, does not hesitate to blackmail his opponents in order to achieve his business projects. The city mayor, Sluss, who refuses to grant Cowperwood a franchise for his elevated roads is a victim of such a practice. As it happens Cowperwood secures the letters that the mayor has sent to his mistress in which he promises to marry her. Hence in order to make him reverse his decision, Cowperwood threatens to denounce him and publish his letters in the newspapers. Nevertheless Cowperwood is not punished for such malpractices as when he pursues his love affairs. Two arguments may be put forward to explain this fact. First, unlike his sexual adventures which appear as a direct challenge to the moral

conventions of his society, Cowperwood's business activities are in accordance with the ideals of the American business ethic. Dreiser's hero himself embodies the characteristics of the American business tycoon. He is self-confident, pragmatic, and shows good business sense. Moreover, Cowperwood's rise to fame and wealth is an example of the greatly admired Horatio Alger success stories.

Second, if Cowperwood despite his corrupt business activities is not brought down, it is because Dreiser does not want to condemn him for such deeds. Cowperwood, like the business tycoons on which he is modelled, is held in esteem by Dreiser because he achieves what Dreiser himself often dreamt of, that is wealth, success, and power. Dreiser's admiration for the American business tycoon is clearly reflected in his statement on Vanderbilt.

The first Vanderbilt was no doubt a brutal, cruel and savage man, but he had the vision which made a trans-continental possible.⁴⁴

As was the case with Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair also dealt with the business world in some of his novels and tried to create a hero businessman. The Metropolis (1908) and its sequel The Moneychangers (1908) are attempts in this line. Sinclair's famous work, The Jungle (1906) has been also classified as a business novel, although

business as such is a secondary theme and the writer is mainly concerned with describing the misfortunes which befall an immigrant family in the Chicago stockyards. However, Sinclair's treatment of the business world is rather superficial and lacks the precision and power with which Dreiser deals with this subject in 'The Trilogy of Desire'. Besides in these novels one cannot see a strong business tycoon on whom the story is centered and who presents any of the features embodied by the real American business magnate. Alan Montague the hero of The Metropolis and The Moneychangers does not possess much knowledge of the business world. Throughout these two novels, Sinclair describes him as a novice who is initiated into the corrupt practices of the business milieu. Moreover far from embracing the business profession, Alan Montague is instead revolted by what he discovers, and like most of Sinclair's heroes undertakes the denunciation of his country's economic system and the teaching of the masses. 'I am going into politics. I am going to try to teach the people,'⁴⁵ says Montague to Miss Hegan at the end of The Moneychangers.

The nearest Sinclair comes to producing a business novel (in the sense that Dreiser did) was in Oil! (1927). Unlike The Metropolis and The Moneychangers, Oil! has a stronger structure and deals with the business world (specifically the Oil business) in detail. In it Sinclair also seems to have made the effort of creating a business

tycoon of Cowperwood's calibre. However, as a business novel, Oil! is a less important work than Dreiser's 'Trilogy of Desire'.

Unlike Cowperwood, Sinclair's hero, Arnold Ross, is not modelled on one of the big businessmen of the Gilded Age. The fact that he is 'an independent oil operator' even suggests that he is a fictional representation of a group of oilmen who were in many ways different if not totally opposed to Rockefeller and his fellows. However if the character of Arnold Ross is not based on the real life of an American business tycoon, the setting of the novel in which this hero operates is the reflection of a precise era. As has been suggested Oil! is,

The story of the Harding era, with its individual warfare, its Oil scandals, its pervasive corruption, and of Southern California society, from its glamorous movie stars to its lurid popular evangelists.⁴⁶

At the beginning of Oil! Sinclair's hero appears like the Cowperwood described by Dreiser in The Titan, that is at his apogee. Unlike Dreiser, Sinclair does not describe the various phases of his character's business ascension. From the first chapter Sinclair shows Arnold Ross engrossed in his business activities, and sketches some of his features by emphasizing mainly his titanic qualities and presenting him as a powerful business tycoon. Sinclair's description of Arnold Ross is in many ways similar to Dreiser's portrait of Cowperwood, since in it Sinclair

tries to suggest that his hero also belongs to that class of people who win and are chosen by destiny to rule. Arnold's magnitude is emphasized in the novel by the use of the horn metaphor. The military voice of the horn reflects indeed the authoritarian business temperament and the power of Arnold Ross.

It was a big commanding horn, hidden away somewhere under the capacious hood of the car ... The voice of his horn was sharp and military; there was in it no undertone of human kindness ... So it was that Dad had a right to have the road clear; that was the meaning of the sharp military voice of the horn, speaking through its nose. Whamm, whamm. Dad is coming. Get out of the way.⁴⁷

Like Cowperwood, Sinclair's hero is presented as a business tycoon who cannot stand any opposition. Ross's oil activities are achieved on a much lesser scale than Cowperwood's financial adventures and street railway works. Ross operates in a limited area in California and his business is only constituted by the exploitation of a few scattered oil wells. Cowperwood instead starts in Philadelphia then moves to the big industrial American cities such as Chicago and New York and ends his career in London. However in spite of his limited business activities Arnold Ross shows all the same strong business qualities. Clearly as is the case with Dreiser in 'The Trilogy of Desire', in the first part of Oil! it is mainly the image of his hero as a superman that Sinclair tries to

convey. Sinclair manages to give such a picture because like Dreiser he also shows his hero acting according to the Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance and the American business ethic. For example, in order to ensure the success of his business enterprises Arnold Ross himself concludes various deals and supervises the entire exploitation of his oil fields. He is often shown rushing from one place to another to attend to his business affairs, because as he says to his son,

You mustn't fool yourself with the idea that you could hire experts to attend to things; for how could you know that a man was an expert unless you know as much as he did.(p.59)

Such a business vision makes of Bunny's father a tough business tycoon who 'has no romance in him'. Like the majority of the people in his profession he applies the business rules strictly. Sometimes he does not even hesitate to display his knowledge of the oil business in order to impress his audience and win business deals.

Ladies and gentlemen ... that well is now flowin' four thousand barrels and payin' me an income of five thousand dollars a day. I got two others drilling, and I got sixteen producing at Antelope. So, ladies and gentlemen, if I say I'm an oil man, you got to agree.(p.37)

The self-confidence and sharpness reflected in these lines are very characteristic of Cowperwood. Sinclair emphasizes his hero's attachment to his business values by

showing his incessant desire to pass them on to Bunny, his son. Arnold Ross never tires of inculcating a slice of his business experience and various professional advices to the young man who is to have first a 'practical' education.

All these things Bunny had heard a hundred times, but Dad never tired of telling them. He was never entirely content unless the boy was by his side, learning the business.(p.59)

However, Bunny, a typical Sinclairian hero, succumbs more easily to the influence of socialist principles than to the teachings of the American business ethic. As is the case with Hal Warner in King Coal and Alan Montague in The Moneychangers, Bunny turns his back on the interests of his class in order to go into denouncing the rise of industrial capitalism and teaching the people. Thus the conclusion is entirely formulaic.

Although he is a tough business tycoon who takes his work seriously, Arnold Ross, unlike Cowperwood, is not ruthless and immoral. On the contrary, Sinclair's descriptions suggest that he has high moral values. He is not, for instance, a merciless business magnate who crushes people or blackmails them in order to achieve his aims. Moreover he does not use his power to take advantage of people's hospitality to seek amorous adventures. On this subject Arnold Ross shows a certain integrity. At any rate, as far as women are concerned, Arnold Ross has already made up his mind. Through his experiences with his wife he becomes 'a little too pessimistic' (p.144) about

women and decides to keep away from them. Undoubtedly the difference between Cowperwood's and Ross' attitudes towards their female counterparts reflects their creators' experiences with women and their responses to the opposite sex.

However it is thanks to his tolerance and appreciation of his workers' problems that Arnold Ross wins himself a kind of sympathy. The attitude he adopts when the strike breaks out in his oilfields is what one might call 'moderate'. In spite of 'losing a fortune everyday' and the strong pressure of his associates 'who thought he was either a crack-brained or a traitor'(p.72), Arnold Ross never tries to use ruthless means to break the strike. Instead he listens to his workers' demands and shows a willingness to compromise with them. He also tries to bring the Employers' federation to understand the workers' cause and make concessions. The fairness of Dad's position is even appreciated in the following statement of Paul Watkins, an extreme leftist and a fervent defender of the workers' rights.

If all the employers were as fair as Mr. Ross, it would be easy to deal with them.(p.165)

Ross's response to the strike is certainly not one that would be expected from a business tycoon whose interests are at stake. The huge number of strikes which characterised American industries in the 1880s and the 1890s illustrate the violent reactions of the big businessmen and

their ruthless treatment of their workers. By showing his hero dealing in a moderate way with his workers Sinclair wants perhaps to illustrate his often advocated thesis that the socialist revolution could occur without bloodshed and that the wealthy would surrender their powers peacefully. The fact that Arnold Ross wins a kind of sympathy from the strike leader Paul Watkins would seem a step towards the achievement of this Sinclairian socialist ideal. Sinclair manages to narrow the wide gap between employer and workers through the character of Ross's son, Bunny. It is mainly under the pressure of his son that Sinclair's hero adopts a moderate attitude. Bunny, for whom the 'speculations upon the problem of capital and labor were not destined to remain academic' (p.164), has a good opportunity to experience this problem when the strike breaks out in his father's oilfields. Naturally as is the case with a typical Sinclairian hero who is furthermore under the strong influence of a 'red' like Paul Watkins, Bunny sides with the workers and is appalled by the ruthless exploitation they are victims of. As his father came to realise Bunny is determined to prevent such an injustice in the oilfields he is to inherit.

1. Introduction

In their famous studies of America, two European observers, Alexis de Tocqueville and Harriet Martineau, commented on the status of women in the New World. De Tocqueville wrote in his Democracy in America (1838)¹:

... in the United States, the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes woman within the narrow circle of domestic interests and duties, and forbids her to step beyond it.²

Harriet Martineau, who undertook her investigation about the same time as Tocqueville, drew a similar conclusion. In Society in America (1837) she stated:

The Americans have, in the treatment of women, fallen below, not only their own democratic principles, but the practice of some parts of the Old World.³

American women were not the subject of degrading abuses as were the negro slaves; however, compared with men, their situation left a lot to be desired. It was easy to perceive in the American home where the balance of power was. There was a wide gap between the privileges of the father and the mother.

With the growth of the new nation women's situation in America improved. Nonetheless the ways in which women had been brought up, and the roles for which they were destined, kept them for a long time in subjection. In her essay, 'The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860' (1966),⁴

Barbara Welter dealt in detail with the teachings given to young American women in order to prepare them for a happy married life, and the kind of sacrifices that society expected them to make. Barbara Welter has suggested that the features which made the ideal American woman are embodied in the four virtues, piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. A religious education was essential for the American young lady because it provided her with spiritual qualities which enabled her to bring up her family according to the moral values of the society. Moreover, since men were regarded as sinners 'par excellence' it was the duty of the pious women to remedy the weaknesses of their husbands and purify the "naughty world of men".⁵ Hence in a way women were endowed with a kind of divine mission, or as B. Welter has also put it, "Religion belonged to women by divine right, a gift of God and nature". (p.152) Similarly religion was regarded as the best refuge for the young girl because it protected her from the corruption of earthly temptations and acted as a kind of "tranquilizer for the many undefined longings which swept even the most pious young girl, and about which it was better to pray than to think".⁶

Women's purity was as important as their piety. Because of the strong moral values which characterised the genteel tradition in America, and a timid attitude toward sex, it was perhaps even more so. A pure woman was often an indication of a good upbringing and the embodiment of

high moral values. On the contrary, the lack of purity was the worst sin of women and their curse. The woman who lost her chastity became the fallen woman. As for a married life which was regarded as the best reward for young ladies, the fallen woman could hardly hope for this since she was judged unfit for the sacred institution. Even worse she was often excluded from the few social activities left to women, and confined to a bitter solitude. Her purity was so important that the young lady was constantly cautioned against the loss of this virtue, and taught how to defend her chastity against evil traps set by men. As Barbara Welter has pointed out, such books as Thomas Branagan's The Excellency of the Female Character Vindicated (1807), The Young Lady's Friend (1837) by Mrs. Eliza Farrar, and The Lady's Wreath (1852), also emphasized the importance of purity for a young lady, and gave her advice to protect herself against men's sexual desires. (p.155)

Domesticity and submissiveness were the two other virtues which completed 'The Cult of True Womanhood' and which also proved of great importance, especially during the woman's married life. One of the first and most important duties assigned to women was to insure and protect the integrity of the family. Such a task itself implied the realisation of a variety of duties which came to constitute the woman's proper domain. These were the education of the children, the maintenance of the family

home, and attendance on the husband's needs. The execution of these domestic duties required special skills on the part of women and a readiness for sacrifice. However, although women played the most important role in raising a unified and prosperous family, they were more often than not merely the executors of their husband's desires.

If the requirements of 'The Cult of True Womanhood' put American women in a disadvantageous position, their practice of these requirements (especially of submissiveness and domesticity) furthered their subjugation and worsened their social status. As Alexis de Tocqueville also suggested, the passage from the parental environment to the husband's house brought about deep transformations in the situation of American women. Although the American girl submitted to the strict virtues of womanhood, she was by no means subject to harsh treatment. The American girl constituted more often than not the pride of her parents and was treated like an idol. She indulged in various pleasures, and enjoyed a way of life which provided her with a certain independence and self-reliance. However in marriage she frequently lost these advantages.

If an unmarried woman is less constrained there (in the U.S.) than elsewhere, a wife is subjected to stricter obligations. The former makes her father's house an abode of freedom and of pleasure; the latter lives in the house of her husband as it were a cloister.⁷

While reflecting what married life had in stock for American women, the above lines also contain the very cause of the beginning of American feminism. A few educated American women, who thanks to their social status escaped the common lot of their sisters, became aware of the inadequate conditions of their sex, and took upon themselves the task of breaking the walls of the marital as well as the fatherly cloisters. Already in 1776, even before the American declaration of independence was drafted, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John Adams, asking him and his peers to be more tolerant toward 'the ladies'. Moreover, in her letter, Mrs Abigail Adams had even threatened that women would have recourse to action if they were not made a few concessions. A passage from this letter is worth quoting:

I long to hear that you have declared an independency - and, by the way, in the new code of laws, which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than (were) your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to investigate a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.⁸

These lines are very illustrative. They leave no doubt about the claims and intentions of Mrs Abigail Adams and those American women who were anxious to enforce certain improvements of women's conditions in general. John Adams's answer to his wife is equally interesting for it illustrates men's general position in the debate over the 'Woman Question', and their determination to preserve their privileges. The following are a few lines from the letter to his wife:

As to your extraordinary code of laws I cannot but laugh ... Your letter was the first intimation that another tribe more numerous and powerful than all the rest had grown discontented. This is rather too coarse a compliment, but you are so saucy, I won't blot it out. Depend on it, we know better than to repeal our masculine systems. Although they are in full force, you know they are little more than theory. We dare not exert our power in its full latitude. We are obliged to go fair and softly, and in practice, you know we are the subjects.⁹

John Adams, as was often the case with other men, did not hesitate to ridicule his wife's demands.

However, it was not until 1848 that the history of American feminism began. In December of that year a group of women led notably by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, gathered at Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss the situation of women in America. At the end of the convention, the participants adopted a series of

resolutions which constituted the declaration of independence of American women. This declaration of independence was however met, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton later recalled, with great hostility.

The debate which characterised the women's convention at Seneca Falls as well as her feminist theories were dealt with in detail by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in her voluminous work, The History of Women's Suffrage (1881).¹⁰ Mrs Stanton's arguments were mainly directed, among others, against the institution of marriage which she saw as the primary cause of women's sufferings, and which she condemned as "opposed to all God's laws".¹¹ Like Alexis de Tocqueville, Elizabeth Cady Stanton also suggested that in marriage women lost their privileges, and even worse, they lost their personality and became "known but in and through the husband".¹² Moreover, according to E.C. Stanton, the laws of marriage were selfishly made by men in such a way as to give them advantages over women. Already in her early years Elizabeth Cady Stanton perceived the inequalities and injustices which characterised marriage since,

... as a wide-eyed little girl, she had sat in the office of her beloved father and listened to him sadly explaining to women clients that their husbands had legal right to their children and their property.¹³

Even without a similar experience many other American feminists became speedily aware of the precarious situation to which marriage subjected women, and came like Elizabeth Cady Stanton to condemn this social institution in vigorous terms. To give but one example, Emma Goldman wrote in her essay, 'Marriage and Love', (1917):

Marriage is primarily an economic arrangement, an insurance pact ... If however woman's premium is a husband, she pays for it with her name, her privacy, her self-respect, her very life 'until death doth part'. Moreover, the marriage insurance condemns her to life-long dependency, to parasitism, to complete uselessness; individual as well as social ... Thus Dante's motto over Inferno applies with equal force to marriage 'ye who enter here leave all hope behind'.¹⁴

The institution of marriage, as these lines show, was often condemned by American feminists because it was precisely regarded as an "economic arrangement" at the expense of women. Women were expected to pledge total submission to their husbands in return for their support. In her work, Women and Economics (1899), Charlotte Gilman Perkins, one of the most important figures in the American feminist movement, also stressed the idea of marriage as an economic arrangement, and demonstrated women's economic dependence. She wrote, among others,

... but all that she may wish to have, all that she may wish to do, must come through a single channel choice. Wealth, power, social distinction, fame - not only these, but home and

happiness, reputation, ease and pleasure, her bread - all must come to her through a small gold ring.¹⁵

Hence in order to improve women's situation in America, Charlotte Gilman Perkins and many other feminists urged a material liberation of women, and a reform of the laws of marriage. Women's economic independence itself could only be achieved, according to the early American feminists, through the expansion of educational opportunities and the right to vote. Because marriage was what young ladies could only hope for, their education was limited to the teachings of domestic duties. When some of the middle-class women did manage to start an academic education, it did not go beyond secondary schools, and was more often than not interrupted by the demands of marriage. It was only in 1821 that the first secondary school for women was founded in Troy (New York), and about twenty years later that Oberlin College for higher education admitted the first women. In the 1870s and the 1880s, various other colleges such as Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley, were opened to women, but they were still "dedicated to the cultivation of the softer feminine virtues".¹⁶ Women often pressed for a higher education in order to express their intellectual abilities, and to take a part in those professions and social activities where they were discriminated against.

The 'Suffragists' on the other hand thought that by getting the right to vote women could improve their situation a great deal. Hence many feminists, and especially the suffragists, with E.C. Stanton and Susan B. Anthony at their head, led various campaigns for "striking out the word 'male', which limits the suffrage to men".¹⁷ In 1887 following the suffragists campaigns the right to vote was granted to women in Kansas.¹⁸ However it was not until 1920 that women throughout the United States won the right to vote.

However, once acquired, the right to vote which the suffragists had long fought for did not seem to achieve the expectations of American feminists. In his essay, 'Feminism As a Radical Ideology',¹⁹ where he has analysed the evolution of the American feminist movement, William L. O'Neill has given a rather negative assessment of its achievements. "In short", O'Neill writes, "feminists had travelled a long circuitous, ascending path - to find themselves in 1920 about where they had been in 1830".²⁰ Suffrage, as he has also suggested, weakened the American feminists' efforts after 1920 because the "struggle for suffrage imposed a spurious unity. Once gained, there was nothing to take the vote's place as a rallying point".²¹ This is not however to say that American feminists failed mainly because they were concentrating their efforts on a 'wrong' issue, that is the suffrage. Their failure, as O'Neill has suggested, lies in the fact that they were

unable to determine clearly the nature of their problems, and consequently devise a strong and constructive ideology to achieve their aims. According to him, the feminist movement in America had wasted its efforts on certain issues which were not directly linked to their cause, or likely to further it. This was mainly the case of what he calls the 'social feminists' who gave priority to social reforms (such as the abolition of child labour and temperance movement) and somehow neglected their own interests.²²

William L. O'Neill is certainly right to point out the many controversies and lack of uniformity which characterised the American feminist movement, and which have more or less hindered its evolution. However his negative conclusions about the achievements of the American feminists and his assumption that they should first concern themselves with matters of self-interest are debatable. To suggest, for instance, that in 1920 American feminists found themselves in the same position as in 1830 is to ignore some of their concrete - even if small - gains. For one thing, at the beginning of the twentieth century the majority of middle-class women got out of their 'lady-like uselessness' and went to challenge men in the higher education institutions and the liberal professions, and met in various clubs to discuss social issues, and also their own conditions. The fact that 'the Woman Question' became a predominant issue in the 1910s is in itself a victory for

American feminists. It was a concrete proof that the battle for women's liberation was well under way, and that in spite of their efforts to ignore the ladies, American men could not prevent their powers being shaken by their revolutionary demands. On the other hand, women's involvement in the defense of other issues was a means of affirming themselves and acquiring equal treatment. Their interest in the social issues of the time proves that these issues were not the concern of men only. It also proved that women could bring their own contribution to solve some of the problems. Unlike William L. O'Neill other critics are against the suggestion that women ought to concern themselves solely with their own cause. Van Reussealer, for example, wrote:

To my mind ... nothing more dangerous could be said to American women to-day than they need, as women, specially to care for the interests of women. These cannot be separated, except in certain minor points from the interests of men.²³

II

To some extent the emancipation of American women was touched upon by some of the nineteenth-century American writers, even if this was not always done from a feminist point of view, or situated in the feminist context such as we know it today. However, the idea that there was a sense of increasing awareness of their position among American

women, and that their condition was undergoing a few changes is clearly reflected in some of the fictional works. The changing position of American women was not only reflected in American fiction by their becoming heroines whose names sometimes made the title of the novels. It was also represented by the emergence of a new type of heroine "who acts, not a heroine who is acted upon"²⁴, as is the case of Charlotte in Susannah Rowson's Charlotte Temple (1791), or Maggie in Stephen Crane's Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893). These emancipated heroines also reflect the changing situation of their real counterparts in the sense that they are mainly shown as self-reliant and having the opportunity of free choice -two characteristics which often brought them in conflict with their environment and the social conventions.

Hawthorne's Hester Prynne (The Scarlet Letter (1850)) is certainly one of the most notable representations of the American woman who nourished the desire to free herself from the harsh social conventions that reduced her sex to a subjugated position. One critic has indeed written, "Today it would be foolish to claim that Hawthorne's whole purpose was the liberation of women but that element of his purpose is thrown into sharper relief".²⁵ Hester Prynne's attempt to liberate herself has an even greater significance since it constitutes a defiance to the severe obligations of the puritan ethic which exercised restraints not only on women, but also on men.

Hester Prynne is an Emersonian figure. Her adulterous act seems to comply with Emerson's formulae in his essay 'Self-Reliance', "whoso would be a man,²⁶ must be a nonconformist".²⁷ Hester Prynne is self-reliant and incurs the punishment of her community because she refuses to conform to the social rules, and chooses to act according to her principles. Like Dreiser's Cowperwood her motto could also be "I satisfy myself". Although Hester Prynne is severely punished she does not regret her act, and is never shown guilt-ridden. The end of the novel shows much more Hester Prynne's resignation to her fate and her helpless submission to the dictates of the rigid moral laws of her community than a repentance for the sin committed. Unlike the entire community, Hester Prynne and even Hawthorne do not regard this act as a sin. Although Hester Prynne accepts her fate at the end of the novel, not only does she come to despise the community for imposing restraints on people's natural leanings, but she also magnifies to some extent her action. As she says to her lover, "What we did had a consecration of its own".²⁸ Hawthorne also shows great sympathy with Hester Prynne and a sneaking admiration for the courage with which she endures her punishment.

All the world had frowned on her, - for seven long years had it frowned upon this lonely woman, - and still she bore it all, nor ever once turned away her firm, sad eyes. Heaven, likewise, had frowned upon her, and she had not died.²⁹

Hawthorne reflects here the heroic stand of his character and elevates her above the community which condemns her.

Although Hawthorne does not condemn Hester Prynne's act as the community does, he nevertheless shows her extreme vulnerability and the fatal consequences of her action on her position as a woman. Throughout the novel he stresses her status of a 'fallen woman' by describing her estrangement from the community, and especially through the scarlet letter 'A' she wears. Hawthorne also suggests that the result of her attempt to liberate herself is very limited for Hester. Hester despises the community and never regrets her act; but she also submits to the community's punishment and its conventions. In the end it is the community which triumphs over Hester Prynne. Hester's act as a self-liberating attempt proves a failure.

As is the case with Hester Prynne, it is also Isabel Archer's own choice and her desire to affirm her freedom which lead to her unfortunate ending. At the beginning of The Portrait of a Lady (1881), Henry James introduces us to Isabel Archer who appears as the fictional representation of the typical nineteenth-century American young woman. She is beautiful, intelligent, and especially pure and innocent. However, unlike her real nineteenth-century counterparts, Isabel Archer is not prompted by "the modest but earnest pursuit of a good husband".³⁰ She wants instead to visit the world and deepen her knowledge. James provides his heroine with the means to do so, and sets her

in Europe where she begins to carry out her dreams. By giving his heroine her economic independence thanks to the money she receives from her uncle, James also puts her in face of a great temptation and responsibility. The sum of money that Isabel Archer inherits is not a liberating element only. It is also an entrapping one. Isabel herself shows her uneasiness:

A large fortune means freedom, and I am afraid of that. It's such a fine thing, and one should make such a good use of it. If one shouldn't, one would be ashamed.³¹

In these lines Isabel Archer reaffirms once again her attachment to her freedom. It is because money is equated with freedom, and because a bad use of money may jeopardise her freedom, that Isabel Archer is afraid. Hence, the handling of this money, or Isabel's actions as a result of her economic independence become the focus of the novel.

The major test as it were for Isabel Archer to exercise her freedom is presented by marriage. Although Isabel Archer shows reservations towards marriage precisely because of its restricting effects on women's ambitions ("I'm not sure I wish to marry anyone"³²), the problem that she faces is not whether or not she should marry, but rather which among her three suitors will exercise the least restrictions on her freedom.

It is through her "free-choice" that Henry James

evaluates his heroine's actions and the extent of her freedom. Up to the description of her marriage with Gilbert Osmond, James presents us with a strong and self-reliant heroine. She disposes of her two suitors Caspar Goodwood and Lord Warburton and sets forth to carry out her ambitious dreams. Isabel's refusal of two marriage proposals are not off-hand decisions. Because of her fear that her marriage with Caspar Goodwood or Lord Warburton may restrict her freedom, she appears very cautious, and carefully weighs the pros and cons of the matter.

It is also after a cautious and profound reflection that Isabel Archer makes her choice and decides to marry Gilbert Osmond. She casts her choice on him because, among her suitors, he is the most sensitive, and appears as the one who is unlikely to intrude with her freedom. Because he is the less privileged Isabel also wants to use her money to contribute to his happiness. However Gilbert Osmond turns out a selfish and cruel person. Through the description of the nightmare into which Isabel's marriage turns, James reverses the image that he gives of his heroine at the beginning of the novel. Isabel Archer no longer appears as the strong, self-reliant, and intelligent heroine. Her personality crumbles under the mean actions of her husband. She becomes dependent on him and submits to his principles. Isabel's weakness is further stressed not only by her realisation of her mistake and the loss of her liberty, but also by her acceptance of her situation,

as reflected mainly in her return to Osmond at the end of the novel. Hence like Hawthorne James also suggests that his heroine's free-choice turns into a kind of self-inflicted punishment. Similarly he shows through her return to Rome Isabel's limitations.

Edna Pontelier in Kate Chopin's The Awakening (1899) and Rose in Hamlin Garland's Rose of Dutcher's Cooly (1895) present another facet of the self-reliant and emancipated heroine. Edna Pontelier and Rose are shown throughout not only challenging the social conventions and man-made laws, but also having their own ways. Theirs is not a liberation attempt which ends with a failure or a helpless resignation. Edna's and Rose's rise to free themselves are characterised by an unwillingness to submit, and most important a sense of fulfilment. Edna and Rose may be called the first American feminist heroines.

Both Edna and Rose experience an awakening, as embodied in their awareness of their abilities and their sexuality, which kindles an urgent need to break out of the restraining social sphere. Rose achieves her self-discovery early in her life; whereas Edna Pontelier begins "to realise her position in the universe as a human being and to the world within and about her ..." ³³ in her married life when she is twenty-eight of age. The marital status is the major difference between Edna and Rose. It accounts therefore for the plot differences of the two novels and the heroines' liberating aims.

Edna's awakening to her situation is perhaps more dramatic and bears a more revolutionary character than Rose's. Her attempt to liberate herself compromises her marriage and casts doubts about her wifely and motherly duties, especially in the eyes of a puritan society. The impact of Edna's anti-conventional actions and of her rejection of the marriage laws is further put in evidence thanks to the sharp contrast offered by the dutiful and motherly Mrs Ratignolle who is the antithesis of Mrs Pontelieir. In Edna Pontelieir, Kate Chopin has also created a strong character. Edna does not hesitate to rise and highly express her independence either to her husband or to the conventional Mrs Ratignolle. Edna's first gesture of self-liberation is marked by her refusal to join Mr Pontelieir who summons her to bed.³⁴ To Mrs Ratignolle Edna makes clear her position towards her family:

I would give up the un-essential; I would give up my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give up myself. I can't make it more clear; it's only something which I am beginning to comprehend which is revealing itself to me. (The Awakening, p.257)

Throughout the novel Edna Pontelieir does as she pleases, and indulges in an adulterous way of life. In spite of her controversial actions Edna, like Hester Prynne, is never guilt-ridden. Her conduct led some critics to compare Edna Pontelieir with Emma Bovary and Anna

Karenina. The three heroines have indeed in common their defiance of the social conventions and a kind of 'mal de vivre' which they hope to fulfil in extra-marital relations. However, unlike Emma Bovary and Anna Karenina, Edna Pontelier does not indulge in adultery to seek a romantic adventure only. Edna's adultery is also a mark of her liberation. It is through the extra-marital relations that she achieves her freedom.

Like Flaubert's heroine or Tolstoy's, Edna Pontelier also ends tragically. Her suicide, however, bears a triumphant note. Edna does not commit suicide because she is desperate or because she ^{is} resigned, like Hester Prynne, to a bad fate. It is because after her awakening she feels a certain contentment. Taken in a figurative sense the fact that Edna goes naked into the vastness of the sea marks a break with an unhappy past and an opening to a new life. Edna's suicide after her awakening is in other words a rebirth.³⁵ It anticipates the kind of fully liberated life that a woman like Garland's Rose is determined to have.

Early in her girlhood Rose becomes aware of the segregating practices against her sex and decides to challenge the man-made world. As Garland writes, "she saw no reason why boys should have all the fun".³⁶ Throughout the novel Garland presents a heroine with radical ideas who reacts aggressively against any attempt to keep her down. Rose is a typical example of the New Woman. Her views on

the woman question and marriage in particular recall the views held by some of the American feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Charlotte Gilman Perkins. Rose, who decides to become a writer in order to celebrate her ideal Williams De Lisle (a circus performer), is aware of the restraints of marriage and its negative impact on her ambitions. As far as Rose is concerned, marriage "meant a change, undoing of plans throwing away ambitions. It meant flinging herself to the immemorial sacrifice men demand of women". (Rose, p.140) Such conviction is further reinforced by the advice Rose gets from some people. Mrs Spencer, whom Rose meets on the train leading her to Madison, advises the young girl not to marry "till you are thirty ... Marry only when you want to be a mother". (p.94) Doctor Thatcher, Rose's protector in Madison, tells her that she could reach her aim "Provided you don't marry". (p.151)

After her graduation at a Madison College, Rose decides to move to Chicago which offered wider literary and artistic opportunities. In Chicago she meets new people and becomes increasingly involved in middle-class social gatherings. Among the people Rose gets acquainted with are Doctor Isabel Herrick and Mason, a journalist, who exercise a great influence on her career. She admires Doctor Isabel Herrick because she embodies her dreams and comes to stand, like William De Lisle, as her ideal. Dr. Isabel Herrick is also an example of the New Woman. She is

full of life, self-confident, and has enough courage to defy her comrades in the medical school with unequivocal words.

Men. I don't say gentlemen.
I'm here for business, and I'm
here to stay. If you're
afraid of competition from a
woman you'd better get out of
the profession. (p.287)

As for the journalist Mason his influence as a critic helps Rose to become an artist, or, at least, paves the way to her success. Mason's leanings towards Rose go beyond his interest in her literary career. Garland's novel, especially the last part of it, is also a romance between Rose and Mason which ends with their marriage.

One might wonder first if Rose, who hates the marriage institution, has not lost faith in her principles? Second, how does Rose come to marry Mason since he does not embody the qualities of her ideal William De Lisle? It is true that Rose feels she will be restricted by her married life. However, Dr. Isabel Herrick assures her that marriage is ~~not~~ incompatible with the development of women's ambitions and does not always mean submission and hardships. (Naturally Dr. Herrick's own marriage emerges as a significant example.) Moreover Rose, as Isabel Herrick also tells her, will find her delight in motherhood. On the other hand although Mason differs from William De Lisle, he has nevertheless certain points in common with Rose. Mason holds similar views on the important question of marriage, that is it should not be an obstacle to

women's careers. Rose also accepts to marry Mason because in the letter which accompanies his marriage proposal, he leaves out "the clause which demands obedience from her". (p.255)

Hence the ending of the novel shows that Garland is not entirely against the marriage institution. He believed like some of the feminists that women should enter marriage on an equal basis, as is the case with his two heroines, Rose and Dr. Isabel Herrick. Throughout the novel Garland protects as it were his heroine from the negative consequences of marriage, and spares her the submission that characterised women in the farming places, such as the Cooly. It is only when she acquires a higher education and becomes independent thanks to her literary career that Rose decides to marry. Then her ambitions and her freedom are no longer at stake.

III

Rose of Dutcher's Cooly (1895) and The Awakening (1899) on publication were received with a hostile reaction. To avoid his novel being banned Hamlin Garland had either to alter or to suppress some of the passages; whereas Kate Chopin could hardly overcome the public's reaction and gradually sank into oblivion. The bad reception of the two novels was caused to a large extent by the Zolaesque leaning toward the treatment of sex, and especially by the creation of a revolutionary type of

heroine. It was the same reasons which led in 1900 to the censorship of Dreiser's Sister Carrie. However, if Dreiser's novel was banned for seven years it was because Dreiser took the treatment of sex in American literature a step further and created the most revolutionary type of heroine to that point. Sister Carrie is a lower class girl who achieves success through controversial means.

At the opening of Sister Carrie(1900) Dreiser presents a heroine who is young and innocent, "she was eighteen years of age, bright, timid and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth".³⁸ Carrie's innocence and her inexperience of life are furthermore emphasized by the gloomy atmosphere which surrounds her departure to Chicago. Carrie, as emerges from Dreiser's descriptions, is about to live her first adult experiences away from her native town, and she as well as her parents are rather uncertain and apprehensive about what Chicago has in store for her. Such an opening, which features a young rural girl of eighteen who sets out for an adventure in a growing city like Chicago, anticipates, to put it simply, that the novel is either about a girl, who like an Horatio Alger hero, is about to achieve success and fame, or like Crane's Maggie, a girl who is going to be abused and destroyed. That is more or less what Dreiser himself suggests at the beginning of his novel.

When a girl leaves her home at eighteen she does one of two things. Either she falls into saving hands and becomes better, or she rapidly assumes

the cosmopolitan standard of virtue and becomes worse. Of an intermediate balance under the circumstances there is no possibility. (p.3)

The possibility that she becomes better seems to have vanished even before Sister Carrie sets foot in Chicago. In the train which takes her to her destination, Carrie, as Dreiser tells us, is accosted by Drouet, a good-looking drummer, who engages in a discussion with her. With Sister Carrie's naiveté and lack of experience, and the apparition of Drouet who is immediately attracted by the young girl's beauty, Dreiser sets up a classical situation. The scene between Carrie and Drouet in the train recalls the beginning of a sentimental novel with the seduction theme at its centre. This is further emphasized by the character of Drouet. Drouet's self-confidence and his manners recall the typical seducer who, taking advantage of the girl's inexperience, lures her by offering his protection and gradually submits her to his wishes.

Although Sister Carrie is impressed by Drouet's appearance, especially by his elegant clothes which he chooses (according to Dreiser) with an artistic taste, it is highly unlikely that she is attracted by the drummer and is willing to embark on a love affair with him. When she arrives in Chicago, Sister Carrie is much more concerned with exploring the city in order to satisfy her curiosity, and, above all, with realising her ambitions. Besides it is very doubtful that a girl like Carrie with a rigid rural

upbringing could depart from her community's conventions so easily, especially when the sad image of her parents bidding her farewell is still present in her mind. Carrie is furthermore dissuaded from following such a course by the rigid discipline of her sister's family. Carrie realises indeed that,

... her relations with Drouet would have to be abandoned ... she read from the manner of Hanson, in the subdued air of Minnie and indeed the whole atmosphere of the flat, a settled opposition to anything save a conservative round of toil. (p.14)

Hence Carrie writes to Drouet to say that "I cannot have you call on me here, ... you will have to wait until you hear from me again". (p.14) But Carrie never tries to contact Drouet, even when she has a hard time looking for a job, or when the unpleasant possibility of returning to her village after her illness, and her failure to support herself, becomes apparent. Dreiser sets up the second meeting between Drouet and Sister Carrie in a most typical naturalist method. It is only by chance that a few days later while hunting desperately for a job that Carrie comes across Drouet again. Chance like fate plays an important role in Dreiser's novels, and, indeed, in the sentimental novel. The heroine of the sentimental novel is often thrown in her seducer's way by a series of unexpected events.

The second meeting between Sister Carrie and Drouet marks the beginning of Dreiser's heroine's 'fall'. As Dreiser shows, Carrie (like the heroine of the sentimental novel) starts to drift, not because she is morally weak, but because she finds herself in a helpless situation which she cannot overcome, and whose consequences she is unable to foresee. Just before Drouet accosts her for the second time, Dreiser shows his heroine in a pitiable state. Her unsuccessful searches for a job, which Dreiser describes so movingly, heightens her feeling of loneliness and shatters her dreams about the city as a place where people could fulfill their ambitions. Carrie's situation is further complicated by her financial difficulties which deeply affect her. Carrie, as Dreiser describes in the *department store episode*, longs eagerly for many of the goods which fascinate her but she cannot possess. Dreiser makes it clear that Carrie's financial difficulties are one of the main causes of her drift. Her fall starts when she accepts Drouet's money. Here again Dreiser emphasizes the power of money and seems to suggest that the economic dependency of women is the cause of their submission.

Although she accepts Drouet's money, the passage where the drummer offers her his financial help proves once again Carrie's attachment to her moral values. In spite of her precarious situation, the idea of accepting Drouet's money frightens Carrie because it is incompatible with her rural upbringing and the conventions of her milieu. Carrie

is rather set on going back home than to accept Drouet's money which would allow her to enjoy the glittering and attractive aspects of the city.

"I came to tell you that, that, I can't take the money."

"... I mustn't take the money", said Carrie ... "I can't wear those things out there. They, - they wouldn't know where I got them".

"What do you want to do?" he smiled. "Go without them?"

"I think I'll go home" she said wearily. (pp.67-68)

Carrie's stammering and her reluctance to take Drouet's money indicate a feeling of uneasiness as well as a sense of guilt. Finally Carrie accepts the money and buys some clothes, but it is only after Drouet has used all his persuasive skills that he manages to impose it on her.

After her seduction by Drouet, the sympathetic image of the pure and innocent girl who is about to be destroyed by the sweeping forces of the city collapses, and Sister Carrie appears under a new light. She ceases to be like the heroine of the sentimental novel, or some of her real nineteenth-century sisters, especially when she shows no regret for the loss of her chastity. "What is it I have lost?" (p.88) thinks Carrie after her fall. The similarity with the classical heroines is further severed because Sister Carrie, unlike Hester Prynne (and even Jennie Gerhardt) is neither made to suffer for her act, nor does she end tragically as Crane's Maggie. On the contrary Sister Carrie, who as a 'fallen woman' should be punished,

starts instead to rise. By sparing his heroine any punishment Dreiser broke with the moral codes of his society and could not but shock genteel minds. The heroine of the American novel had to comply with the bourgeois standards of virtue that characterised her real American model. This meant that she had to be first and foremost pure. Purity was "for an unmarried heroine ... her virginity; for a wife it was marital fidelity. It was therefore practically synonymous with chastity, and chastity was the sine qua non of a heroine".³⁹ The heroine who failed to preserve her chastity became an outcast. Through Carrie's loss of purity which remains unpunished Dreiser suggests that chastity is no longer essential to the heroine's code of virtue. By doing this Dreiser had no intention of offending. If Dreiser does not condemn his heroine it is because he does not judge Carrie's seduction in moral terms but gives it rather a socio-economic interpretation. Dreiser, as we have seen, attributes his heroine's drift to the influence of the socio-economic forces.

That Sister Carrie appears as a new type of heroine in American fiction is reflected in the second half of the novel when she becomes Hurstwood's mistress. Through her affair with Drouet and her first appearance in the theatre as an actress, Carrie gains some experience and becomes more confident. She no longer appears as the helpless and frightened young girl who submitted easily to Drouet's

desires. Drouet himself could judge of Carrie's changing attitude since he found it increasingly difficult to escape her demands to marry her. It is true that Carrie proves once again naive and innocent when Hurstwood seduces her and manages to take her to Montreal then to New York. Carrie strongly reacts to Hurstwood for having deceived her, but finally accepts her situation. She does so because she is again lured by a promise of marriage. Carrie, as Dreiser shows, has high ambitions, and sees in the wealthy Hurstwood a means to realise her dreams.

It is interesting to note that although Sister Carrie stays with Hurstwood in New York she shows no intention of submitting to his wishes or playing the usual role of a devoted wife. At the beginning of her union with Hurstwood, Dreiser makes brief references to Carrie's domestic activities and describes his heroine once or twice with Hurstwood around the dining table. He also suggests that Hurstwood is impressed by Carrie's homely leanings. However, Dreiser's brief descriptions hardly suggest the submissiveness and domesticity which were often demanded of American women, and which some of the nineteenth-century fictional heroines embody. Furthermore Dreiser's heroine's image as the submissive and dutiful housewife is destroyed by the descriptions of her frequent promenades with Mrs Vance, and of her visits to the theatre. Dreiser's heroine is seen most of the time out in the city rather than at home. At any rate the descriptions showing Sister

Carrie in the streets and other social gathering places are more extensive, while Carrie's responses to the urban glittering aspects leave no doubt about her true leanings. Obviously Carrie finds a certain happiness only when she feels a part of the city and its material wealth.

Unlike Jennie Gerhardt, Carrie is far from being that loving woman who surrounds her 'husband' with her affection and sacrifices herself for him. Carrie's union with Hurstwood never reaches the kind of understanding and the happiness which characterise the Jennie-Lester Kane relationship. As one critic has suggested, "Carrie's is a nature which is passive when it is comfortable;"³⁹ however, as Dreiser also emphasizes "self-interest with her was high". (p.14) Hence when it appears that "Hurstwood was nothing" in New York (p.305) and her ambitions are jeopardised, Carrie reacts immediately to her new situation. When Hurstwood starts to drift, Carrie does not follow him in his decline. Instead she uses her theatrical talents and does not only manage to sustain herself, but also to achieve success. But what is even more novel in Dreiser's presentation of this event is that Sister Carrie not only accepts her dominant position over Hurstwood, but also punishes him by abandoning him and becoming indifferent to his fate. For the first time in American fiction it is the woman who punishes the man, and it is the seducer who ends tragically not the seduced girl. As Midori Sasaki has also suggested, "with Dreiser ... the

pattern of the seduction novel radically changes; now the seduced woman of the poor classes becomes successful".⁴⁰ Moreover in Sister Carrie Dreiser created a character who appears very much as the precursor of yet again another type of heroine in American literature, which one critic has called 'The Great American Bitch'. She is, in the words of Edmund Wilson whom the critic quotes, "the impossible civilized woman who despises the civilized man for his failure in initiative and nerve and then jealously tries to break him down as soon as he begins to exhibit any".⁴¹

Unlike Sister Carrie, Dreiser's second novel Jennie Gerhardt (1911) was received more enthusiastically by the American audience, and was given favourable reviews by influential critics. H.L.Mencken, to give one example, called Jennie Gerhardt, 'A Novel of the First Rank', and stated:

If you miss reading 'Jennie Gerhardt' ... you will miss the best American novel, all things considered, that has reached the book counters in a dozen years. On second thought change a 'dozen' into 'twenty-five years'.⁴²

The different response to these novels was determined to a large extent by the response to their respective heroine. Sister Carrie and Jennie Gerhardt, who are of the same age and subjected to the influences of the same environment, are indeed two extreme characters.

Like Sister Carrie, Jennie also heavily draws on Dreiser's sisters, namely Mame and Sylvia. Through the story of Jennie Gerhardt Dreiser tells us once again a series of occurrences which characterised his family's past.⁴³ However, Jennie presents certain features which are in total contrast with those characterising her real models, and especially Sister Carrie. That Jennie constitutes such a deep contrast with Sister Carrie is due to some extent to the fact that in addition to his sisters, Jennie is also modelled on Dreiser's mother. In his study of Theodore Dreiser, Robert Penn Warren has emphasized this point.

In a more specific way, this novel (Jennie Gerhardt) is intensely personal. The image of Dreiser's mother stands behind Jennie's mother, but even more significantly, she stands behind Jennie herself; for Jennie may be taken as the embodiment of the qualities that Dreiser celebrated in his mother and that, somehow, he could never find elsewhere. In a novel he could transfer those qualities to a young woman admirably designed for deep and abiding love. The kind of woman that Dreiser, in the real world could never find, or could not recognize.⁴⁴

The modelling of Jennie Gerhardt on Dreiser's mother may well explain why, as C. Dailly has suggested, "while Carrie is oriented to the exterior life, Jennie is to the interior ... While Carrie is depicted as a woman of the new age, Jennie often is seen sighing or clenching her fingers in an

agony of poetic feeling".⁴⁵ Jennie's interior life and her caring nature are strongly emphasized in the moving portrait that Dreiser draws of her at the beginning of chapter two. This description is important at least in two ways. First it gives a significant image of Dreiser's heroine and anticipates to a large extent the self-sacrificing nature she displays throughout the novel. In his depiction of Jennie Dreiser writes, for example,

Did Sebastian fall and injure
himself it was she who
struggled with straining
anxiety, carried him safely to
his mother.⁴⁶

These lines find their immediate illustration when Bass, who has been sent with the rest of the children to pick up coal, is arrested and taken to jail. In face of her family's distress and their failure to pay the ten dollars fine to get Bass out of jail, Jennie does not hesitate to seek Senator Brander's help. To be sure after the Senator's intervention, Bass was released and went back safely to Mrs Gerhardt who was deeply grieved by this misfortune. However for Jennie this event proves fatal, since her visit to Senator Brander ends with her seduction. Second, while it reveals the kind of woman that is Jennie, this portrait also suggests that Jennie is of a unique type. Although his various descriptions of his heroine make it clear that she belongs to a particular world, Dreiser emphasizes furthermore this idea by repeating, "Jennie was different from all women," or "It is not so with all women". (p.100)

Jennie astonishes with her self-sacrifice and her love for her family. Unlike Sister Carrie she is not selfish and has no ambitions. As Dreiser also states, she does not envy other girls, and does not even express the slightest complaint in face of the harshness of her fate.

She knew that there were other girls whose lives were infinitely freer and fuller, but it never occurred to her to be meanly envious. (p.16)

Through Jennie, Dreiser seems to represent a type of American woman who belonged to an older generation. One even suspects that Jennie Gerhardt was well received, and Dreiser's heroine appealed to a greater audience, because she recalls to some extent the dutiful, self-sacrificing, and loving American woman who was admired by her society and constituted the ideal of men. It is true that Jennie becomes a 'fallen woman' and lives in an irregular union with Lester Kane - a conduct which is incompatible with the American moral values of the time. However, thanks to her good-heartedness and her angel-like nature, Jennie somehow rehabilitates herself and proves that she is far from being a weak woman. Moreover by showing her family's distress, and by emphasizing the role of fate in determining Jennie's destiny, Dreiser suggests that his heroine is not a sinner. Oddly enough, in spite of her fall, Jennie emerges from this novel as the example of the noble-hearted. In spite of

his religious conservatism and his strong opposition to Jennie, Mr. Gerhardt does not fail to see his daughter's good nature.

"You're a good girl, Jennie" he said brokenly. "You've been good to me. I've been hard and cross, but I'm an old man. You forgive me, don't you?"
(p.345)

That Jennie recalls through some of her characteristics the 'old' American woman who embodies the ideals of submissiveness and domesticity is also reflected in her relation with Senator Brander and Lester Kane. Both the Senator and Lester are first attracted to Jennie because they are struck by her astonishing beauty. As Dreiser shows, their interest in Jennie is primarily, if not only, sexual - although this applies more to Lester Kane than to Senator Brander. Because he is of an advanced age and feels lonely with nobody to care for him, Senator Brander sees in Jennie a potential life companion.

He could not help looking about him now and then and speculating upon the fact that he had no one to care for him. His chamber seemed strangely hollow at times his own personality exceedingly disagreeable. "Fifty" he often thought to himself. "Alone. Absolutely alone". (p.20)

However, Lester Kane leaves no doubt about his intentions towards Jennie. To Lester Jennie appears as a commodity.⁴⁷

She (Jennie) appealed to him on every side; he had never known anybody quite like her.

Marriage was not only impossible but unnecessary. He had only to say 'come' and she must obey; it was her destiny. (p.136)

But Jennie proves more than a mere sexual woman only. Lester Kane (and even Senator Brander in his short relation with Dreiser's heroine) realises that Jennie possesses spiritual qualities which are as enticing as her beauty. The combination of these aspects in the character of Jennie seems indeed to make up, as Sybil B. Weir has suggested, "That rare woman who exists only to satisfy the man's needs".⁴⁸ One suspects that it is precisely because he can have all his needs satisfied that Lester, who first looks at his relationship with Jennie as another of his many love adventures, becomes gradually attached to her. Jennie surrounds Lester with all her love and creates for him the ideal conditions for happiness, without actually expecting any reward or complaining. She is all self-giving, protective and draws her only and real joy from Lester's happiness.

Jennie, who had hoped all along that one day Lester would regularise their union by taking her as his wife, sees her best dreams shattered when Lester marries instead Mrs Gerald (Letty Pace) his former admirer. Lester's decision is by no means the result of his lack of love for Jennie or a reaction to her unfortunate past. Lester comes to such a decision because his interests, and especially the pressures of his upper class milieu lead him

to do so. Dreiser shows clearly that his heroine's background and the class barriers between her and Lester play an important role in determining her fate. He leaves no doubt, for instance, about the Kanes' hostility towards Jennie, and their uneasiness at the prospect of Lester's marriage with his heroine. Lester could decide in favour of Jennie and abandon his interests. But, as Dreiser shows, Lester is caught in a crisis, and under such circumstances he is likely to take the 'wrong' decision. However, Lester's inability to solve his crisis and his submission to the pressures of his milieu also prove his weakness. He himself emphasizes his helplessness and the inadequacy of his decision when, on his deathbed, he attempts, like William Gerhardt, to make Jennie justice.

"I've always wanted to say to you, Jennie ... That I haven't been satisfied with the way we parted. It wasn't the right thing after all. I haven't been any happier. I'm sorry. I wish now for my own peace of mind, that I hadn't done it". "... It seems strange, but you're the only woman I ever did love truly. We should have never parted." (p.422)

Such a statement is rather melodramatically obvious. It cannot but continue to reflect the selfishness and hypocrisy of Lester's upper-class conventional thinking.

IV

Unlike Dreiser and other writers we have dealt with here, Upton Sinclair did not create a heroine who could be remembered along with Sister Carrie and Jennie Gerhardt, or Edna Ponteliev and Garland's Rose, not to mention a Hester Prynne or an Isabel Archer. Yet some of the women in Sinclair's novels do play an important role, and sometimes appear as the main protagonists. 'Red Mary' in King Coal (1917) emerges as a prominent figure thanks to her struggle for the workers' rights, and her relation to the hero, Hal Warner. In Boston (1928), Sinclair tells the tragic story of Sacco and Vanzetti through the adventures of Cornelia Thornwell, who leaves her aristocratic milieu and goes on to experience the harsh life of Italian immigrants. Similarly, it is two women characters who are at the centre of Sylvia's Marriage (1908). The novel opens with Mrs Mary Abbott who, after giving a few details about her married life, tells the marriage story of Sylvia, an aristocratic lady whom she befriended and gradually converted to socialist ideas. If these characters appear rather weak and do not develop into heroines it is because, like many of their male counterparts, they have no freedom of their own, and are manipulated by Sinclair in such a way as to espouse his causes and reach his conclusions about various issues. But the fact that these characters carry their creator's ideas is also very useful since it helps to give a clearer insight into Sinclair's attitude towards some of

the socio-economic problems. Through these characters we can indeed perceive, among others, Sinclair's opinion about the 'Woman Question', and more precisely about the issues of marriage, love, and sex.

Through the description of his protagonists' origins and their culture in The Jungle (1906), Sinclair manages to show, among others, the situation of women in the rural areas of the Old Continent, and to give an insight not only into the lot reserved to immigrant women in the New World, but also in the clash between these women's moral values and the harshness of industrial society. As emerges from Sinclair's descriptions, social conventions in Lithuania (perhaps more than in the U.S.) keep women in lower positions and treat them as commodities. At any rate the marriage institution in those places appears as a merely economic arrangement. Jurgis, for instance,

Without ever having spoken a word to her (Ona), with no more than the exchange of half a dozen smiles, he found himself, purple in the face with embarrassment and terror, asking her parents to sell (my emphasis) her to him for his wife -and offering his father's two horses he had been sent to the fair to sell.⁴⁹

Sinclair's terminology in this passage leaves no doubt about the economic character of marriage in Lithuania. At the beginning of The Jungle Sinclair also emphasizes the economic dependency of women. When he asks for Ona's hand the first time, Jurgis is rejected apparently because the

girl's father is rich and does not wish to 'sell' his daughter at an early age. But when driven by his strong love for Ona, Jurgis dares a second attempt

He found an unexpected state of affairs - for the girl's father had died, and his estate was tied up with creditors; Jurgis's heart leapt as he realised that now the prize was within his reach. (The Jungle, p.29)

However, one must not reduce the institution of marriage in Lithuania to a mere 'selling' and 'buying'. The fact that young people, like Jurgis, offer goods to the bride or her parents is a part of a cultural tradition which both sides cling to because a failure to do so is an affront to their dignity and pride.

It is also interesting to analyse Sinclair's descriptions of the courtship and love ethics which characterise Jurgis's homeland. Between Jurgis and Ona it was love at first sight. No words have been exchanged or close intimacy established. Only a "half dozen smiles" give to both characters the sentiment of belonging to each other. As was the case with the puritan laws in the U.S., the social conventions in Lithuania, especially in the conservative rural areas, were very strict about the upbringing of young women. The latter had to be protected, to preserve their innocence and purity until the sacred institution of marriage. As Antanas Musteikis has suggested,

The Lithuanian village was rather 'decent', by which is meant that there was no acknowledgement of a possibility of divorce and no sexual relations before marriage. The last point is strongly emphasized in folksongs, they often refer to the wreath of rue which symbolizes chastity; and woe to a girl who lost that wreath.⁵⁰

Hence Lithuanian girls had no alternative but to obey strictly the social code of virtue in order to avoid the unfortunate title of a 'fallen women' and be rejected by their community. The 'decency' of the Lithuanian village and the strictness of its social conventions also meant, as Musteikis has suggested, that women had to be faithful to their husbands, and submissive.

Given the nature of the traditions and the social values which characterised Lithuania, Antanas Musteikis has rejected Sinclair's assumption that Ona's seduction by her boss and Marija's drift were due mainly to their poor economic conditions. As he put it:

Thus we do not exclude the possibility that Ona Rudkus may have been seduced by a boss, but hardly could she do that on the basis of purely economic interests, even if they were related to the existence of the whole family. The same is to be said about the other young girl, Marija Berzinskas, in the same family ... What seems to be legitimate and not far from 'permissible' to a liberal is by no means 'permissible' to a conservative Lithuanian girl.⁵¹

That the Lithuanian family has strong values and clings fiercely to its cultural tradition once in the United States is clearly shown by Upton Sinclair. Moreover, as John Yoder has noted, Jurgis also proves his attachment to his old values when he discovers that Ona was seduced by her boss, and consequently finds no alternative but to attack the man in order to avenge his honour.⁵² Hence when he attributes Ona's and Marija's falls to their economic difficulties, Sinclair is not suggesting in any way that the two women are morally weak, or that they can easily depart from their values. Obviously Sinclair's attacks are directed against the treatment of the immigrants in the U.S. and the evil effects of American capitalism rather than against his heroes' moral standards. One does agree with A. Musteikis that the moral values of the Lithuanians are strong, but the socio-economic conditions that prevailed in America in the 1890s and the 1900s proved more often than not stronger and more destructive than the immigrants' own values.

In Womanhood in America (1975), Mary P. Ryan has shown, for instance, how immigrant women were exploited in the sweatshops and sexually abused. She writes, among others, that

The sweatshops, in particular, conditioned working-class women to fear sex, as bosses and foremen promised a better wage for sexual favours, and lecherous men preyed upon the working girl on the way to and from the factory.⁵³

Under such conditions it was hard for immigrant women, even the most conservative of them, to cling to their cultural traditions and values. Those who tried to resist the favours of their bosses and foremen received threats and were speedily made to submit. Others found themselves simply helpless in face of their employers' brutality, and were abused. As Mary P. Ryan has also reported,

Polish girls in Chicago were more apt to describe their sexual experiences in the repressive language of rape: "there he knocked me down ... and did something bad to me".⁵⁴

In The Jungle, Ona also goes through the same ordeal. Her boss, as she explains to Jurgis, gives her money and threatens to hound her family to death when she resists him. Ona's Lithuanian conservative upbringing could not save her from her boss's brutality.

"Then one day he caught hold of me - he would not let go - he - he."

"Where was that?"

"In the hallway - at night -after everyone had gone."

(p.181)

Like many of Sinclair's novels, Sylvia's Marriage (1914) is not artistically a strong novel. Its story is simple and rather banal. Moreover this novel, like many others, follows a technical pattern which is so dear to Upton Sinclair, that is the progressive conversion of the main character from an aristocrat or a bourgeois capitalist to a fervent socialist. In spite of its weakness, Sylvia's Marriage is however an important analysis of the 'woman

question' in America, and an unprecedented treatment of such questions as marriage, love, and sex. These questions which were fervently discussed in women's circles at the close of the nineteenth century, and became prominent issues during the first decade of the twentieth century, are dealt with by Upton Sinclair in unequivocal terms. The following lines give an idea about Sinclair's achievement in this novel:

Very severe and courageous. It would indeed be difficult to deny or extenuate the appalling truth of Mr Sinclair's indictment.⁵⁵

Such a statement is not unfounded. Many of the ideas that Upton Sinclair suggests in this novel support various arguments stated by prominent American feminists such as, Charlotte Gilman Perkins and Emma Goldman in their writings about women's conditions. Moreover Sinclair's descriptions of the marriage experiences of Mary Abbott and Sylvia appear as vivid illustrations of the feminist theories, and give a clearer insight into the nature of the woman question.

It is also interesting to note that Sinclair seems to have been influenced by feminist ideas, and by some of the prominent feminists of the time. This is mainly reflected in his character Mary Abbott (the narrator) who appears very much like another Emma Goldman. Unlike Goldman, Mary Abbott is not an anarchist but a socialist, as is the case with many of Sinclair's protagonists and Sinclair himself.

However, one can draw a few parallels between Emma Goldman and Sinclair's heroine. Like Goldman, Mary Abbott is speedily disillusioned in her married life. Her dreams of a happy home and a unified family were soon shattered since, as she puts it, "The man I married turned out to be a petty tyrant". (p.2) Mary Abbott, as she also suggests, accepted her fate with resignation because "I had borne ... three children, and there was nothing to do but make the best of my bargain." (p.2) But when the children grew up the inevitable separation had come. It is through such an experience in her married life that Mary Abbott realises her status as a woman and becomes like Goldman a radical feminist. Mary Abbott also realises the importance of education for the emancipation of women; hence while she is still under her husband's domination she starts to educate herself. Like Emma Goldman, Upton Sinclair shows Mary Abbott delivering speeches. Moreover, because she also serves as a guide to the other main character, Sylvia, and reveals to her certain truths about the socio-economic situation of women, Mary Abbott is seen as a learned person capable of becoming a prominent leader. Mary Abbott also recalls the eminent anarchist thanks to her strong devotion to her cause and her fierce attacks on the socio-economic conditions created by industrial capitalism.

But it is mainly through some of her ideas that Mary Abbott best recalls Emma Goldman. Like Goldman, Sinclair's heroine opposes marriage because it restricts,

according to her, women's ambitions and makes them dependent on their husbands. Hence she strongly advocates the economic liberation of women:

I believe that women ought to earn their own living and be independent and free from man's control. (p.117)

However, while Emma Goldman rejected categorically the institution of marriage and saw it as a curse upon women, Sinclair's heroine accepts it, but not without any reservation:

I believe in marriage. I consider it a sacred thing; I would do anything in my power to protect and preserve a marriage. But I hold that it must be an equal partnership. (p.137)

However, it was precisely because this 'equal partnership' was hardly achievable that marriage was often regarded as hopeless for women and generally condemned. Finally one can be reminded of a figure like Emma Goldman in this extract from one of Mrs Mary Abbott's conversations with Sylvia:

I don't believe in your religion. I don't believe in anything that you could call religion; and I argue about it at the least provocation. I deliver violent harrangues on street corners and have been arrested during a strike. I believe in women's suffrage. I even argue in approval of window smashing. (p.117)

Once again, if the "violent harrangues" and the "window smashing" suggest certain similarities between the two ladies, the idea of women's suffrage, however, divides them. Emma Goldman rejected the universal suffrage because "it perpetuated the state, an establishment already responsible for untold crimes".⁵⁶

Undoubtedly the creation of an experienced and intellectually strong character, like Mrs Mary Abbott, works Sinclair's purpose (which is to show Sylvia's conversion from an aristocrat to a socialist) a great deal. In this novel Sylvia's conversion occurs gradually, and appears much more plausible thanks to the learned and scientific analyses of Mrs Mary Abbott. At the beginning of the novel the young lady is totally immersed in the customs of her class. The idea that her luxurious way of life and her socio-economic status could be found fault with, let alone the idea of a rebellion against such a way of life, never occurs to Sylvia's mind. It is the encounter with Mary Abbott which sets the process of "social revolution" in Sinclair's young character. Sylvia, who accepts the existing conditions and her social status without question, feels a certain uneasiness when she first speaks to Mary Abbott. That the prevailing socio-economic conditions could be greatly improved (possibly through socialism) is a discovery to Sylvia. Throughout her discussions with Mary Abbott, Sinclair shows Sylvia van Tuiver bewildered by the new truths delivered to her for

they seem totally incompatible with her parental teachings. Sometimes the conversations between the two ladies turn into a kind of lecture session on sociology or economics where Sylvia appears like a student. Sylvia's straightforward and sometimes naive questions, and her eagerness to satisfy her curiosity, emphasize her student-like position. That Sylvia appears so uninformed about her social status is the result of her upper-class upbringing.

Sinclair's Sylvia's Marriage, especially the description of Sylvia's way of life, recall some of the points made by Thorstein Veblen about the treatment of upper-class women in The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899). It is not perhaps a coincidence that in addition to Mary Abbott's influence, Sylvia awakes to her real situation by reading Veblen's The Theory of the Leisure Class. As Mary Abbott relates,

In the course of our talks I had mentioned Veblen, and she had been reading snatches of his work on the leisure class, and I was surprised, and not a little amused, to observe her reaction to it ... Veblen's theme, the idle rich, and the arts and graces whereby they demonstrate their power, was the stuff of which her life was made. (p.32)

Veblen's main argument about the socio-economic situation of upper-class women of whom Sylvia is a fictional representation, is expressed in the following lines:

In modern communities which have reached the higher levels of industrial development, the upper class has accumulated so

great a mass of wealth as to
place its women above all
imputation of all vulgarly
productive labor.⁵⁷

The accumulation of wealth, as Veblen also suggested, does not only prevent upper-class women from doing productive work, but it also provides them with all the necessary means to lead the idle and conspicuous consuming life which characterises this milieu. And any attempt on behalf of these women to step out of their own sphere, as Sylvia's story illustrates, is regarded as a threat to the traditions of this milieu or a breach of its honour.

Throughout Sylvia's story, and especially during the description of her conversion process, Sinclair manages to keep a certain credibility, and succeeds in presenting his young protagonist as the victim of the petty customs and corrupt practices of her milieu. We have indeed sympathy for Sylvia and feel a kind of complicity when she starts her rebellion, and sometimes reduced some members of her family to ridicule by showing them the pettiness of their social conventions. However, when her socio-political education comes to an end, and Sylvia starts to act on her own, without the guidance of her devoted friend Mary Abbott, she becomes less interesting. More than ever before in this novel, she is manipulated by Upton Sinclair even to the extent of echoing his words. Here is an example where Sylvia tells her husband,

I do not love you. I know now
that it can never under any
circumstances be right for a

women to give herself in the
intimacy of the sex-relation
without love. (p.170)

In one of his letters, Sinclair also wrote, "What I have is a repugnance to 'love-making' without love".⁵⁸ Unlike Mrs Abbott, after her conversion Sylvia appears rather as a naive feminist. One does not take her seriously. Although we admire her rebellion against her aristocratic milieu, the manner in which she rebels is rather innocent. In this novel it is rather Mary Abbott and not Sylvia who emerges as a strong character.

In King Coal (1917) Upton Sinclair created his most interesting female character. In this novel the Irish girl, Mary Burke, plays as notable a role as Hal Warner, the main protagonist, and is very often the focus of the story. Unlike Mary Abbott and Sylvia she is allowed a certain freedom. Her role in the novel is not strictly limited to echoing Sinclair's socio-political beliefs. Mary's freedom or the stepping out of the usual sphere ascribed to Sinclair's characters is mainly expressed in the romance which Sinclair creates between his heroine and Hal Warner, and which reflects as George Brandes has suggested, "most beautifully the author's poetic attitude".⁵⁹ Thanks to this romance between Hal Warner and Mary Burke, King Coal is more or less saved from the monotony of Sinclair's other novels.

While the love story between Mary Burke and Hal Warner shows to some extent Sinclair's artistic talents, it also reveals his weaknesses, especially when dealing with the issues of love and sex. Sinclair, as Floyd Dell has pointed out in his biography of the author, and as he himself suggested in Love's Pilgrimage (1911), had rather a negative attitude towards "human sexual habits", which more often than not he regarded as "an illustration of 'exploitation' by a ruling class".⁶⁰ At the beginning of King Coal Sinclair seems to overcome this problem. He appears at ease when describing the first meeting between Hal Warner and Mary Burke, and regards an eventual romance between his characters as a matter of course.

She was the first beautiful sight Hal had seen since he had come up the canyon, and it was only natural that he should be interested. It seemed to him that, so long as the girl stared he had a right to stare back. (p.24)

The possibility that Hal Warner and Mary Burke are to be the main protagonists of a sentimental story is further emphasized, as Sinclair suggests, by the mutual interest of the characters in each other. Even before this first meeting ends, Sinclair leaves no doubt about its outcome. In an almost poetic passage he writes,

Whether the girl knew it - or cared - she had won the woman's first victory - she had caught the man's mind and pinned it with curiosity ... The wild rose, apparently unconscious that she had said anything epoch-making was busy with the

wash; and meantime Hal Warner studied her features and pondered her words. (p.26)

However, as the love between Hal Warner and Mary Burke grows, Sinclair loses his confidence and can no longer describe his heroes' meetings with the same easiness and freedom. When he describes some of their love scenes, he practices a kind of censorship and very often ends his descriptions abruptly showing thus "the psychic burden of his repressions".⁶¹ This is especially reflected in the first important love scene when Sinclair suddenly suggests the impossible love between Mary Burke and Hal Warner:

But not many minutes passed before a cold fear began to steal over Hal. There was a girl at home waiting, for him; "Mary," he pleaded, "We mustn't do this."
"Why not?"
"Because I'm not free. There is some one else." (p.75)

Such handling could only weaken the image of Sinclair's hero. After this scene Hal Warner appears as a petty seducer. Furthermore he is naive and makes himself ridiculous when feeling that he deceived Mary Burke,

he asked, humbly, "we can still be friends, Mary, can't we? You must know I'm sorry." (p.75)

As in many other instances one can easily feel Sinclair's hand behind such an answer, and his opposition to "human sexual habits". Sinclair seems rather to prefer for his characters the kind of "sisterly love" between Thyrsis and Corydon he described in Love's Pilgrimage. Similarly, in

one of the best passages in this novel, where Sinclair brings the sentimental story between his protagonists to its climax, Hal Warner finds himself helpless in face of Mary's desperate love declarations, and is unable to defend himself adequately. His helplessness is clearly reflected in his reluctant answers.

(Mary) "I've thought ye liked to be with me - not just because ye were sorry for me, but because of me. I've not been sure, but I cannot help thinkin' it is so. Is it?"
"Yes, it is," he said, a little uncertainly. "I do care for you."
"Then is it that you don't care for that other girl all the time?"
"No," he said, "it is not that".
"Ye can care for two girls at the same time?"
He did not know what to say.
"It would seem that I can, Mary". (p.186)

If Hal Warner appears so weak and experiences contradictory feelings, this is due to his creator's weaknesses and clumsiness. In King Coal, Upton Sinclair has a double problem. First, as we have seen, he is unable to overcome the uneasiness he felt whenever he dealt with love scenes, and therefore the sentimental story he tells suffers. Second, in this novel Sinclair happens to deal with two stories, that is the romance between Hal Warner and Mary Burke, and the story of the miners' fight against their exploiters. But it is obvious that Sinclair is much more concerned with describing the catastrophic working and

living conditions of the miners and championing their cause. It seems that the romance between Hal Warner and Mary Burke is used by Upton Sinclair only to liven the novel up.

We have suggested earlier that Mary Burke is allowed a certain freedom; however, in spite of such freedom she could not develop in an independent character. Like the other (feminine) protagonists she has to work first of all Sinclair's aims, and especially be devoted to the miners' cause. Upton Sinclair could not allow a successful love between Mary Burke and Hal Warner because this would have meant Mary's 'betrayal' of her class, and indifference to their cause - an attitude which is incompatible with the principles of a Sinclairian hero (or heroine) who is destined to help the proletariat and establish justice and equality through socialism. Sinclair keeps Mary Burke where she belongs because she knows the hardships of her people, and, as she appears the most conscious character, it is her duty to lead the miners so that they improve their situation. Mary Burke is destined to become a 'Joan of Arc' (to whom she is indeed compared in this novel) or a "valkure of the workers" (King Coal, p.xi) rather than a Cinderella.

1. Introduction

The history of American labour at the turn of the nineteenth century was characterised by a series of strikes and fierce clashes between workers and employers. Between 1881 and 1905 about 37,000 strikes broke out in the U.S. and disrupted the country's economy. The workers' determination to improve their living and working conditions, and the intransigence of the big businessmen who jealously defended their privileges, brought about outbursts of violence which left thousands of victims and several million dollars worth of damaged property.¹

The situation of the working class in America left a lot to be desired. Long working hours, low wages, and the dreaded tenements, constituted the lot reserved to the hundreds of thousands of people who poured in the factories in order to keep the machines of production turning. In many industries the workers' toil varied between twelve and fifteen hours a day, and most of the work was done in unbearable and unhealthy conditions. As Carl N. Degler has suggested, "steelworkers often laboured twelve hours, six days a week, in front of blazing furnaces even in the heat of summer for wages that sometimes barely covered living costs. Silver miners in Nevada worked in such heat in the deep shafts that they had to be splashed with water periodically to enable them to endure the temperature".² Philip S. Foner has also reported that:

Working conditions in most factories in the 1880s were unsatisfactory. Poor ventilation, poor lighting, inadequate sanitary conditions, and the horrible danger of fire to which many workers were exposed, were all causes of frequent complaints by witnesses before the senate and state investigating committees. Dangerous machinery was often unprotected and the number of industrial accidents was high.³

The low wages that workers received for their labour added to their precarious conditions. In 1894 in the Hanover smelting works, Utah, furnacemen and blast furnace feeders received \$2.70 per 12 hours, but other labourers were less fortunate and had wages as low as \$1.57 per 10 hours. In the slaughtering and meat packing houses, "the average weekly earnings of (the) highest skilled workman who had a 'steady job' have varied from \$14.11 in 1877 to \$21.70 in 1902". The unskilled workers, however, had weekly earnings which "ranged from \$5.64 in 1897 to \$8.68 in 1902".⁴ In order to help cover the everyday needs of the family and avoid starvation, women and children had to join their efforts to the men's, and brought home a few more dollars. However, they were even more exploited and received half of the men's wages, if not less. Because they constituted a cheap source of labour, women and children could easily find jobs. Hence "the number of women gainfully employed jumped from 1.9 million in 1870 to

5.3 millions thirty years later ... The number of working children below the age of 15 also rose significantly - from 750,000 in 1870 to 1.75 million in 1900".⁵

As for the living conditions they were no better. The workers and their families, especially in the mining regions, were compelled to live in the company's owned houses and pay exorbitant rents. More often than not these houses lacked the basic means of living and the slightest hygiene. In his book, How the Other Half Lives (1890), Jacob Riis also gave an insight into how thousands of workers lived in the New York tenements.⁶ It was the rule rather than the exception to find ten or twelve people in a single room, and two or three of them sharing the same mattress. The "seven cent lodging houses" were some of the places where many workers, with New York's underworld, sought a bed for the night. In the miserable conditions characterising these places all sorts of evil thrived, and the crime rate spiralled upwards.

In face of poor living and working conditions, American workers saw no alternative but to organise themselves to fight the ruthlessness of the big businessmen to improve their conditions. Among the various trade unions which attempted to organise the labour force in America the most important were the Knights of Labor, the A.F.L. (The American Federation of Labor), and the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World). The Knights of Labor started as a local union which represented the garment

workers of Philadelphia, but it grew rapidly and gathered thousands of workers under its banner. It also went on to concern itself with social and economic reforms. After various difficulties and bitter struggles fought against employers, the Knights of Labor won a great victory in 1885 over the railroad baron, Jay Gould, who accepted its demands. This success over an influential businessman made the reputation of the Knights of Labor and brought its membership to 700,000 people. However, in 1886 another strike against the same Jay Gould failed to achieve similar results.⁷

The Knights of Labor were replaced in their task of organising the workers by the American Federation of Labor which was created in 1886 by Samuel Gompers. The A.F.L. was what one might call a moderate organisation which represented mainly skilled workers. It rejected the violent means of its predecessors, and accepted the capitalist system. It was determined, on the other hand, to defend the workers' rights. As was the case with the Knights of Labor, the A.F.L. advocated an increase of the workers' wages (\$2.00 a day), the eight hour day, and the implementation of other social measures such as, the improvement of working conditions and the abolition of child labour. In spite of its efforts to get its demands implemented pacifically, the A.F.L. could not prevent the various outbursts of violence engendered by strikes.

The violence which characterised some of the strikes sometimes reached dramatic proportions. In 1877, following a series of wage cuts the 'Great Railway Strike' broke out in Pittsburgh and lasted for three weeks. The conflict between the strikers and the troops ended tragically when the Philadelphia militia fired into the crowd killing twenty six people. In addition to these casualties, \$5,000,000 worth of property was destroyed by the strikers.⁸ The Hay Market affair of 1886 also gives an idea of how violent the strikes were. On May 3, 1886 the employers of the McCormick harvester went on strike in order to obtain the reduction of their working day to eight hours. Far from achieving the workers' aims, the strike ended badly when four people were shot dead by the police and several others were injured. On May 4, about 3,000 people gathered in Chicago Haymarket Square to protest against the foregoing events. When the police tried to disperse the demonstrators, a bomb was thrown killing many people, among them seven policemen. The police failed to find the bombthrower, but arrested eight suspected anarchists and brought them to trial. After a controversial proceeding five men were sentenced to death and three others to life imprisonment.⁹

Such events, in addition to the worsening conditions of the workers, resulted in the radicalization of a part of the American labour movement, as epitomised especially by the creation of the I.W.W. The I.W.W. came into being on

June 27, 1905 during a labour convention held in Chicago. It was created at the beginning of the century mainly because of "the impossibility of converting the conservative American Federation of Labour into a type of organization which would achieve real benefits for the majority of workingmen and women; and the ineffectiveness of the existing organization of the industrial and radical type to build a movement which would organize and unite the entire working class".¹⁰ The I.W.W. presented itself as the saviour of the labour force in America and set as its principal task the overthrow of the capitalist system which was the cause of wage slavery. However, in spite of its fervent propaganda and the wide influence that its leaders claimed to have in the labour milieu, the I.W.W. failed to attract an important membership. How many workers the I.W.W. gathered under its banner is difficult to say, since its leadership often exaggerated the number of their members. It seems however that at its highest the membership of the I.W.W. never exceeded the 18,000 adherents.

The failure of these major trade unions to organize the workers and to fight employers effectively reflects to a large extent their weaknesses, and the many controversies which hindered the efforts of the American labour movement. For one thing the Knights of Labor, the A.F.L. and the I.W.W., had inconsistent policies, and more often than not their leaders did not take into consideration the wishes of

their rank and file. Some of the decisions of the Knights of Labor and the A.F.L. leadership even appeared to be against their workers' interests. To give one example, in 1894 during the Pullman strike, the American Railway Union (which was affiliated to the A.F.L.) was defeated in its efforts to call a general strike because Samuel Gompers (the A.F.L. leader) and other "A.F.L. top leaders were not too eager to come to the assistance of the A.R.U., and were not sorry to see the new union of railroad workers defeated".¹¹ Gompers was even believed to have said "when he left New York to come to Chicago: 'I am going to the funeral of the American Railway Union'".¹² On the other hand in spite of their desire to organise the labour force in America and their calls for solidarity in the American labour movement, the Knights of Labor and the A.F.L. often discriminated against minority groups, especially immigrants, blacks, and women. Terence Powderly (the Knights of Labor leader), for example, strongly opposed the admission of Chinese workers in his organisation. When he became Grand Master Workman, he declared that "Asians could not become members of the order, and, furthermore that they were unfit even to reside in the United States".¹³ Such a statement which also applied to other immigrants, and was reiterated by Samuel Gompers, also illustrates the contradictions of the trade-union's leadership, its racism, and its inability to organise the workers. To exclude the immigrants and other minority groups from the American

labour movement was to deprive it of half its force. Likewise, it was a failure to understand the immigrants' crucial role in the development of American economy and the influences they might have exercised on other spheres of American life. However, one must not blame the leadership of these organisations only for the difficulties of the American labour movement. The workers themselves were as much responsible for their problems as the leaders. Unlike their fellow workers in Europe, American workers had no class consciousness and most of them were hostile to socialism. As Seymour Lipset has suggested, "The lack of class conscious ideology in the American labour movement may be directly traced to the equalitarian, anti-class orientation of the values associated with America's national identity".¹⁴ The dream of success, as illustrated by the myth of rags to riches, or the Horatio Alger myth, and the abundance of wealth and opportunities, made the class barriers in the U.S. loose and social mobility flexible. The achievement-orientated inclinations also strengthened individualism and self-interest. More often than not comparisons between socio-economic status in American society were made between individuals rather than in class terms. It is precisely the equalitarian values that characterised the American identity which engendered a reaction to socialism, or at least, did not make it imperative for "the rank and file of the American labour movement ... to look for an ideology that justified the

changes which they desired in the society".¹⁵ Moreover socialism was regarded by American workers as an alien ideology brought over to the United States by immigrants, especially Germans and Jews. In fact apart from these two immigrant groups which remained somehow faithful to their ideals, native workers, and even immigrant workers such as Slavs in the coal-mining industry and Italians in the garment district of New York, rarely voted socialist. Through assimilation and Americanization many of the immigrants were also gradually converted from a certain radicalism to conservatism, and the acceptance of American values and the American capitalist system.¹⁶ In addition the rivalries opposing natives and immigrants constituted a great obstacle to solidarity between American workers. The immigrant was often regarded as a dangerous job competitor since he could "work for almost nothing and seem to be able to live on wind...".¹⁷ Hence the hatred for foreigners and the increasing demands for restriction. To some extent these nativistic arguments can be justified. Some of the immigrants were very often reluctant to support their fellow workers because the strikes meant for them long days of privation, if not the loss of their jobs. Other immigrants who lived in miserable conditions were even ready to act as strike-breakers provided that their everyday needs were satisfied.

II. Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair and the Labour Problem

Commenting on Dreiser's newspaper days, F.O. Matthiessen wrote in his study of the writer,

In St Louis he (Dreiser) had covered a speech by Terence V. Powderly still 'perfectly ignorant' as to the rights of capital and labor, and thinking of himself as somehow superior to workmen. He had not been sharp or practical enough to grasp the significance of the panic of 1893. At Toledo he had found that his sympathies were all with the strikers, but he seems not to have paid much attention to the great Pullman strike in Chicago this summer, or to the fact that this brought to national prominence a fellow native of Terre haute, Eugene Debs, who had been born there sixteen years before Dreiser.¹⁸

Dreiser's apparent indifference to the conflict between labour and capital at that time is undebatable. However, it would be a mistake to suggest that Dreiser was completely ignorant of the labour problem, and that he did not feel concerned about it throughout his literary career. In 1894 when the Pullman strike broke out Dreiser was twenty three years old. His contacts with Chicago gave him an insight into the glittering material wealth of the big cities and filled him with ambitious dreams. Like his heroine, Sister Carrie, he became animated by a selfish desire to achieve success and be a part of 'the Walled City'. Moreover, in his twenties Dreiser had difficulties

in finding a permanent and well-paid job which would allow him to lift himself out of poverty. Dreiser's difficulties and his desires in this important phase of his life had certainly made him overlook some of the socio-economic upheavals of his country, or fail to denounce them openly. Dreiser, as F.O. Matthiessen also put it, "... was depressed ... by 'the vast gap' he could see for himself between rich and poor. But he was also dazzled by the magnificent mansions at Schenley Park".¹⁹

That Dreiser became increasingly acquainted with the labour problem, and had even experienced the hardships of American workers is clearly indicated by some of the literature he left on this subject. One of the most reliable sources is An Amateur Laborer which was composed in 1904 by Dreiser and which was edited and published in 1983 by Richard W. Dowell.²⁰ In An Amateur Laborer Dreiser relates the hard times he went through in New York while he was hunting for a job, and his experiences as a manual labourer on the New York Central railroad. When the Doubleday Page Company refused to honour their contract of issuing Sister Carrie, and his novel was censored, Dreiser experienced a long illness which almost wrecked his literary career. How bad his situation was at that time is reflected in the following passage:

For three years ... I was a victim of neurasthenia. For that period I endured all the pains, all dreads, all the agonies of one whose mind is under a cloud. For me, as I beheld it then, and as I know

it to be now, a world or given order was passing. I was about to lose consciousness of these things that collectively we call life. Thought failed me, reason failed me. I could not follow out a given chain of ideas if my life had depended on it. For days and weeks and months and years I seemed absolutely alone with a vast sea that urged and persuaded without explaining. I was to change but I could not see why. The wonder of it, the indifference of it, the inexplicableness of it, seized me as with an icy hand. I was afraid. I did not want to die. (An Amateur Laborer, p.3)

To these precarious health conditions must be added Dreiser's growing worries about his financial difficulties. Without a job, Dreiser saw the small sum of money he had when he arrived in New York, dwindle from day to day. Under such conditions Dreiser was unable to be creative in spite of his efforts to write some articles in order to earn a few dollars.

Following the advice of some of the health specialists who examined him while he was in Philadelphia, Dreiser decided to become a day labourer for some time to recover his physical and mental health. However, until he managed to find something to do, Dreiser went through more harsh experiences which aggravated his situation. Most of his attempts to find a job, as he related in An Amateur Laborer, were unfruitful and painfully discouraging. They

were further complicated by the long queues of the thousands of unemployed and Dreiser's 'cowardly nature' which prevented him from applying to many institutions.

Dozens upon dozens of times, have I stood outside of all sorts of institutions wondering, debating, saying that I was unsuited to it or the business was unsuited to me and in the end turning back disconsolately to my room, there to brood and worry over my fate ... Sickness had apparently made a coward of me.
(An Amateur Laborer, p.17)

At this stage Dreiser's situation reached its worst. As he recalled, "I got down so low that my diet consisted of bread and milk ... and a potato or an apple which had fallen from a wagon, with which I served to vary my diet". (p.28) As for his accommodation he had, "... One of the smallest rooms I have ever been in, a mere cell, six by eight feet ..." (p.22)

After several setbacks, Dreiser managed to find a job on the New York Central Railroad where he began his first experience as a manual labourer. Dreiser's job consisted of carrying long ash posts about eight feet long and six to eight inches thick. For a man who lived many months on milk, bread, and a potato or an apple, and was physically weak, such a task proved very hard. In the following lines Dreiser recalls these difficult moments:

I went up to it (an ash post) and tried to pick it up, but I found that for me it was an exceedingly heavy weight. I swung it around and by dint of pulling got it in position and

my shoulders under it, but when I first lifted it I thought I should stumble and fall. A sharp pain shot across my legs. I found myself straining for breath, and with the greatest effort I dragged myself along, trying to look as if I could do it. (p.111)

Later Dreiser moved to another job where he had "to carry shavings, to sweep the floors and remove the accumulation of blocks of wood and sticks which littered the milling department, and the carpenters' room above; to load and unload lumber to and from cars and to carry in lumber". (p.119) However, this job, as Dreiser states, was no less hard than the first one.

Dreiser's experience as a day labourer was rather disheartening and gave him a grim view of the workers' world. In the shop where he came to work, everything combined to create a depressing and gloomy atmosphere. The frenetic noises of the machinery and the incessant movements of the workers suggested that constant work was the rule in the establishment. Moreover, many workers, according to him, eyed him with a certain hostility, and wondered about his physical weakness. He found most of them dull, rude, and uninteresting, while their discussions were pointless and so "barren that it was painful". Hence he did not hide his dislike of them, "I studied them all, looking at first one and the other and trying to make out their characteristics, but finding few if any that I could admire". (p.115) Yet he also sympathised with them

because they were hard-working men who toiled from seven in the morning till five-thirty under tyrant foremen. Dreiser himself could hardly bear to wake up so early in order to be at his work at seven and return to his room in the evening so exhausted. Such experience was all the more depressing since Dreiser could not overcome his own feelings of superiority.

The fact that I was thus safely ensconced in the labor world for the time being had a very depressing effect on me. Used as I was to the freedom of the world outside - the better clothes and more extended range of thought than could easily be here employed was a thing which weighed heavily upon me.
(p.123)

Clearly Dreiser was unable to identify himself with the workers. His literary ambitions and pursuit of success made it difficult for him to accept the dullness if not the 'vulgarity' of manual labour and caused him to speak of it rather negatively.

Later Theodore Dreiser dealt again with the labour problem and was more sympathetic towards the workers. He strongly reacted against their precarious conditions and criticised the employers for their hostility towards the labour force. Dreiser's siding with the labour movement is not surprising, since it occurred at a time when he turned to the left, and became increasingly concerned with the socio-economic problems of America. One of the most

important documents in this respect is an unpublished essay entitled 'The Position of Labor'²¹ that Dreiser probably wrote after the Wall Street crash in 1929.

In this essay Dreiser gave a forceful report about labour conditions in America and put forward suggestions to solve the existing problem. To begin with he attacked the employers for giving false statements about the labour situation and for blaming the workers for their miserable conditions. "Concerning the thousands killed and crippled each year", Dreiser writes, "the employers say that 90% of the accidents are because the men themselves don't think." And commenting on such assumption he says "how do these employers know what they are talking about. Ridiculous?"

(p.2) Similarly he finds the suggestion that the carelessness of the workers is due to the fact that they "are cross in the morning, a penetrating analysis, a brilliant attempt at solution". (p.3) Dreiser states clearly that the employers multiply such unfounded allegations in order to justify their exploitation of the workers, and because they "want their laborers to be ignorant of anything which might better their state". (p.3) Dreiser finds indeed that the workers' situation leaves a lot to be desired. Some of the labourers, according to him, worked for long hours and were paid "such low wages that 63% of Connecticut children have to leave school at the age of fourteen to help support the family". (p.3) But such a fact, as Dreiser also suggests, has negative

consequences, since "Child labor is a main cause of ignorance among working people". (p.6) Hence Dreiser deploras the lack of a strong and effective law to prohibit the employment of children. Moreover, in his report he also tells about young girls and young men, who filled with ambitions came to the city to pursue a promising career, but were driven to do lower and humiliating jobs. "One girl", as he reports, "with her heart set on becoming a swell stenographer had money only to go to the city and become a five and ten cent store clerk". (p.5) Dreiser also reacts against the unemployment situation for which he seems to blame technological development, and especially the large use of machines which is "making a joke out of men".

Hundreds of thousands of places which workers used to fill are now taken care of by improved mechanical devices ... Right now 3% of the entire population of the New York suburbs is out of work. 3% are unemployed in whole states, like Michigan and California, and 6% of the entire population are jobless.
(p.10)

Therefore Dreiser sets a series of suggestions, and proposes amendments to the constitution to solve the labour problem. In his labour plan, for instance, Dreiser wants to make it "absolutely illegal to employ children under sixteen", and urges for higher wages for the workers so that they can lift themselves out of squalid poverty. As for the unemployment situation Dreiser suggests that,

The only remedy ... is an amendment to the constitution stating that men cannot be

discharged through improvement of machinery ... This could be coordinated with a shorter working day program. The Federal Employment bureau, under my plan, should by job analysis and cooperation with the employers of large industrial plants, find places adapted to these men. (p.11)

Dreiser's plan is somewhat naive for it ignores the problem at the centre of the debate on technological change and employment. As is shown in the following lines the improvement of machinery leads necessarily to the gradual discharge of workers:

technical innovations lighten human toil by substituting mechanical power for hand labour; therefore, technological progress as such is necessarily labour-displacing and in the absence of sufficient capital-widening, will lead to chronic unemployment.²²

If the introduction of machinery worsens the workers' conditions it is because it greatly favours the employers' interests. The factory owner invests a certain capital to acquire the mechanized means of production, so that his profits somehow dwindle; but in the long run his investment proves capital-saving. The machines are more efficient; they increase the productivity and reduce the cost of labour. Because the machines gradually replace the workers the employer does no longer need to buy labour. His profits and accumulation of capital are not only achieved, but also increased, through the use of machinery.

In spite of some of the shortcomings 'The Position of Labor' is an important document on the labour problem because in it Dreiser deals extensively with difficulties characterising the working class in America, and shows the exact nature of their hardships through a series of precise examples. Dreiser's merit in this essay does not lie in exposing the difficulties of the American working class only. Some of his suggestions about solving labour difficulties are also significant, and show some knowledge of labour questions. What Dreiser says about the strikes in the following lines is what workers in many countries have today achieved through bitter fights.

Next the strike should be made legal and should be settled by three men, one representative from the company, one from the laborers, and one whom these two mutual agree on. The right to picket and carry on strikers' activities peacefully should be absolute. (p.17)

Theodore Dreiser came out again strongly in favour of the workers when in November 1931 he conducted, as Chairman of the National Committee for the Protection of Political Prisoners, a group of writers, among them John Dos Passos, to investigate the bloody strikes which broke out in the Harlan County (Kentucky) coal fields.²³ The presence of Dreiser in the Harlan coal fields drew great publicity, since he was closely followed by newspaper men who reported his activities in the mine camps and interviewed him. Dreiser, as he reported, visited various mines and talked

with the miners and their wives, and with the authorities and labour organizers. He was shocked by the employers' ruthless treatment of the miners. As he put it,

Considering the prosperity that these coal corporations and all others in the United States have enjoyed up until 1929 it is absolutely disgusting and shameful that the moment the lapse comes in prosperity they resort to the methods they have here and in other places throughout the United States.²⁴

Similarly Dreiser strongly criticised the bad living conditions of the workers and their economic problems. The villages in which they lived were, according to him, slums, and added that "the workers were so poor they were unable to obtain decent clothing and decent food, or enjoy entertainment of any kind".²⁵ In face of the situation prevailing in the Harlan coal fields, Dreiser wrote to all U.S. Senators urging them to inquire in the case of the "18,000 miners in grip of reign of terror".²⁶

Dreiser also led an investigation in the Pittsburgh mine fields. In this case Dreiser mainly attacked the A.F.L. which he accused of deserting labour, and of being an exclusive organization that seeks to defend the interests of a few people at the expense of the other workers, especially the non-organized workers.

Such accusations were indeed often made to the A.F.L. which fared badly in the hands of radical critics because of its moderate policies and its failure to oppose strongly

the anti-labour employers. To give an example, Sinclair, like Dreiser, reacted against this labour organisation because, according to him, it set the skilled against the unskilled workers. Sinclair also criticised the leaders of the A.F.L. because once they were elected to the direction of this organization in order to defend the workers' interests, they seemed to adopt another course of action, and "cease to live the lives of workingmen, and become upper class personages".²⁷ Sinclair even launched personal attacks on Samuel Gompers whom he described as being "disturbed over the jail sentences which are hanging over his head".²⁸ Upton Sinclair also wished the collapse of the A.F.L. He wanted it replaced by the I.W.W. which is, according to him, a stronger and a better representative of the workers' interests.

Dreiser and Sinclair in turn came under the attacks of the A.F.L. leaders who defended themselves and their organisation against both writers' allegations. Answering Dreiser's charges, William Green, the then president of the A.F.L., stated that "His (Dreiser's) attack on the A.F.L. is unjustifiable ... He speaks as other men who have criticised the A.F.L. in other times and who think in academic terms ... Furthermore Mr. Dreiser shows an utter lack of knowledge of the organizational activities of the A.F.L.". ²⁹ As for Sinclair, Samuel Gompers (the first leader of the A.F.L.) wrote a long article in The American Federationist, 'Upton Sinclair's Mental Markmanship'

(1914), in which he dismissed Sinclair's attacks on the A.F.L.. Some of Gompers' revocations of Sinclair's allegations are justifiable. Sinclair seems to have exaggerated the importance of the I.W.W., and was too optimistic about its activities and its future. As we have already seen the I.W.W. membership had never gone beyond 18,000, and Sinclair's assertion that it had a larger membership than the A.F.L. is but erroneous. Sinclair also seems to have overlooked the internal disputes which characterised the I.W.W. and which led to its collapse.

However, this does not mean that he was utterly ignorant of the efforts and weaknesses of the American labour movement, and, indeed, of the conflict between labour and capital. Some of his novels such as The Jungle (1906) and King Coal (1917) illustrate significantly Sinclair's acquaintance with labour conditions in America. The Jungle, as is well known, was the result of an investigation in the Chicago stockyards which Sinclair undertook in 1904, after the 'Great Beef Strike', for The Appeal to Reason. Sinclair's findings about the catastrophic working conditions in the meat-packing houses are dealt with in detail in The Jungle. What Sinclair found in the meat-packing houses filled him with horror. He described the place as a "veritable fortress of oppression".³⁰

It was also an investigation in the problems of labour which led Sinclair to write King Coal. King Coal was written as a result of the Colorado coal strike which ended in what came to be known as the Ludlow massacre. In September, 1913, the coal miners in Colorado went out on strike asking for an increase in their wages and the improvement of their working and living conditions. At its beginning the strike was quite successful. About 11,000 workers stopped their activities and showed strong solidarity. However, the employers also stood firm against the strikers, and refused to make concessions. After several weeks of the strike, tension set in in the mining camps. The strikers, who with their families were thrown out of the company-owned houses, decided to build tents on the coal fields at Ludlow. Such a decision annoyed the employers immensely. A few clashes between the workers and the company's guards occurred from time to time, but no major accident was reported. The strike lasted for several months during which the workers held meetings to discuss the employers' attitude, and to reinforce their determination to win the strike. As a result of rumours about an eventual attack on the camps by the company's armed guards and militiamen, the strikers started to gather ammunitions to defend themselves. The growing tension reached its climax on April 20, 1914 when the militia marched on the camps. The workers resisted the attack, but the well-equipped militiamen and the

sheriff's troops speedily overcame the strikers' resistance. They fired without hesitation on women and children, and set the tents on fire in order to destroy the colony. The Ludlow massacre left three women and fourteen children dead, and several workers injured. Three of the strike leaders were also arrested and beaten to death.³¹

On April 27, 1914, Sinclair, who learnt about the Ludlow massacre through a few socialist papers, attended a meeting in Carnegie Hall where the consequences of the Colorado strike were discussed. He was greatly shocked by what he heard, and decided to organize mass picketing near Rockefeller's offices at 26 Broadway. Sinclair was convinced that Rockefeller (the Chairman of the Colorado Fuel and Iron) was at the origin of the massacre. With his wife, Mary Craig, Lincoln Steffens, and other people, Sinclair walked silently in front of the Standard Oil offices, wearing a black band mourning. Later he was arrested by the police for disorderly behaviour, and was fined \$3 by the judge. As he refused to pay the fine he was taken to jail for three days, while his wife continued to picket Rockefeller's offices. Sinclair's picketing, and especially his arrest, drew the attention of a few journalists. However, Sinclair failed to give the Ludlow massacre the publicity he wanted. Hence he decided to go to Colorado coal fields to investigate the situation, and write a novel about the latest events. On May 12, he arrived in Colorado. As was the case in the Chicago

stockyards, Sinclair met a number of workers and discussed with them their living and working conditions, and the consequences of the coal strike. He addressed the Women's Peace Organization, and delivered a long speech in front of two thousand people gathered at the state capital in which he launched strong attacks on the employers of the C.F. & I, especially Rockefeller. Similarly Sinclair had the opportunity of addressing many people during a free speech held in an open air theatre on the property of one of the Rockefellers' eminent neighbours in Colorado. During his stay in Colorado Sinclair also wrote letters to President Wilson, Rockefeller, and to members of the socialist party urging them to act in order to alleviate the miners' miseries.

Sinclair's views on the conflict between labour and capital are also expressed in Letters to Judd (1925), a piece of work which contains, as the title suggests, a series of letters addressed to an old carpenter, Judd, who did various jobs at the Sinclair's place. The problem of labour and capital itself is only one of the many questions Sinclair analyses in this work which is a veritable socio-economic and political document on American society. In his first letter Sinclair stresses the right of every worker "... to what he has produced by his own labour,"³⁸ and suggests that the government should "protect him in

this right". Sinclair also suggests that if the workers were in such a precarious situation it was because they were robbed of the fruit of their labour.

It is obvious that if any man gets a thing he hasn't produced, some other man must have produced that thing and not got it. (p.4)

In spite of the huge technological development which had improved the productivity and consequently should have improved the workers' lot, Upton Sinclair states to Judd that "the condition of the mass of workers in the United States has been getting slowly but steadily worse for the past thirty five years". (p.8) Sinclair acknowledges the fact that the wages had somehow increased, but the workers still remained hard up, and sometimes became even worse off, because the cost of living also increased; hence the purchasing ability of the workers decreased. Sinclair also offers to Judd a long analysis about the relationship between wage increases and price rises, and concludes that "real wages in the United States from 1890 to 1924 suffered a decrease of five per cent". (p.8) In one of his letters, Sinclair illustrates the dramatic situation of the American worker, and the conflict between labour and capital with the following image:

Figure to yourself a man pumping water from the ground, filling a tank to supply his house. There is an abundance of water, and the pump is big and powerful, and every time the man pushes the handle many gallons go rushing towards the tank. The man works all day,

yet when he goes to the house in the evening, he discovers there are only a few drops of water in his tank. Some men have tapped the pipe, all along the way, and have diverted the water to their own tank; so the man has to supply hundreds of gallons to others before he can get a few drops for himself.
(p.20)

This is a good rhetorical illustration of the conflict between labour and capital, but seems somehow naive and simplistic. It only gives a caricature of the issue. Yet in spite of its simplicity, since it is addressed to Judd, a working man, it could prove effective. Besides Sinclair does not confine himself to this image to give a view of the labour problem to his friend. In the rest of his letter he goes back to American everyday life and takes examples from the business and financial milieus of Wall Street to illustrate the "biggest tap-lines" and the businessmen's exploitation of the workers. In so doing he demonstrates clear and well documented knowledge of his subject matter.

III The Treatment of the Labour Problem in the Novels of Dreiser and Sinclair

In June 1931 when Dreiser went to Pittsburgh to investigate the miners' strike, there appeared in the Pittsburgh press articles about his visit with the following headlines: 'Dreiser is Seeking Mine Strike Facts', 'Writer Here to Get Material for New Book'. And

the commentator went on to say, "Dreiser, author of 'The American Tragedy' ... expected to publish a new book in the fall about the economic situation in America and his trip here was to gather material at first hand".³³ In July 1931 after his investigation in the Pittsburgh coal fields, Dreiser received the following letter from Upton Sinclair.³⁴

July 13, 1931

My Dear Dreiser,

I have been delighted to see your activity in the labor struggle, and I cannot resist the impulse to send you my congratulations and sincere regards.

I want to make to you a suggestion which probably is superfluous: why don't you write the great American labor novel? I cannot think of anything from your pen that would make such a deep impression or be of greater service to America. For some ten years I have begged Sinclair Lewis to do it and he got as far as to gather the material but then he gave it up, and asked me to do it. But as you know, I have written half a dozen novels on the subject and anything I could say would be repetition. But the material is there for you to do the greatest work of your life.

Sincerely,

Upton Sinclair

Unfortunately, we do not know Dreiser's answer to Sinclair's suggestion, if there was any answer at all. But it is obvious that this suggestion was never put into practice, even if Dreiser himself seems to have gone to the Pittsburgh coal fields to collect further material for the work. Since Dreiser was so concerned with the labour problem, especially at the beginning of the 1930s, and given the fact that since the publication of An American

Tragedy (1925) Dreiser somehow began to be converted to Communism, one might indeed ask why did Dreiser not write a lengthy book on the conflict between labour and capital?

It must be mentioned that Dreiser had various plans for works based on the subject of labour, some of which had crystallised. Among these projects was an An Amateur Laborer (1904) which, as we have seen, was a record of Dreiser's experiences as a manual laborer and which the writer had started in 1904 but had never completed. Later Dreiser had planned to include many of the episodes of An Amateur Laborer in other works. In his long introduction to An Amateur Laborer, Richard W. Dowell has stated that "Dreiser often spoke of resurrecting the unfinished manuscript and including it, or the events it chronicled, in a projected third autobiographical volume tentatively titled A Literary Apprenticeship" (xi). Dreiser, as Richard W. Dowell has also reported, was greatly encouraged by a certain Joseph H. Coates to use his labour experiences in order to do a work "on the laboring man's side of life", (xxxii) which is a "good subject". The idea seems to have interested Dreiser who started working on it. However, after some time he left the manuscript once again unfinished. Because of his financial difficulties Dreiser chose to write short essays on the subject of labour which he could sell. Among the essays Dreiser submitted for publication the most important were 'The Toil of the Laborer' (1913) and 'The Mighty Burke' (1911).

In 'The Toil of the Laborer' which was later included in Hey-Rub-A-Dub-Dub,³⁵ Dreiser drew heavily on his experiences on the New York Central Railroad, and the material he gathered in An Amateur Laborer. The view that Dreiser found his experience as a day laborer grim, and that he was somehow disheartened by the harshness of the labour world is once again strongly emphasized in 'The Toil of the Laborer'. At the beginning of the essay Dreiser reveals clearly his negative response; "the toil of the laborer is artless. There is in it neither form, nor colour, nor tone". (p.98) The two other sections of the essay start with the same depreciative statements about labour. The beginning of section two reads, "The toil of the laborer is thoughtless. There is in it neither conception nor initiative, nor the development of that which is new". (p.100) Dreiser opens the last section by expressing clearly the harshness of the labour world and its depressing atmosphere, "the toil of the laborer is without mercy, its grim insistence unrequited by anything save the meagre wages wherewith it is paid". (p.104)

'The Toil of the Laborer' is also interesting because it shows Dreiser's gradual change of attitude towards the workers. His indifference and sometimes superior attitudes grow, at the end of the essay, into more than mere sympathies with the workers. Dreiser clearly comes to side with them against their employers. Dreiser, as is reflected in 'The Toil of the Laborer', reverses his

attitude after witnessing the huge discrepancies between the workers and their employers, and especially through his own rather fictional experience as a foreman. The wide gap between the workers and the company owners had indeed intensified the quarrel that Dreiser had with the rich. In one of the passages he clearly expresses his reaction to these discrepancies. As he puts it, the monotony of the labour world "... coupled with the meagre wages, the enormous wealth of the corporation which controlled it all, the utter indifference of those who sat at the top to those who worked at the bottom, was a difficult thing to endure". (p.101)

As foreman Dreiser finds it difficult to perform the task assigned to him because he realises that like other foremen he has to be ruthless with his workers to satisfy his employers. Hence he faces the prospect of choosing sides in the conflict between labour and capital because "there could be no middle ground". And, as he states, "because of my natural sympathies with these underlings" (p.109), and because he does not want "to be a tool in the hands of their indifferent masters who would not interest themselves in them" (p.111), he resolves to quit his position as foreman.

'The Mighty Burke'³⁶ contrasts sharply with 'The Toil of the Laborer'. In it Dreiser gives rather a humorous picture of the labour world. The story is based on an Irish foreman whom Dreiser met in the New York Central

Railroad while he was working as a day laborer. Dreiser's sympathetic description of mighty Rourke (or Burke) is somehow surprising since, during his labour days, Dreiser developed a hatred for foremen who appeared to him as ruthless people. Mighty Rourke, however, was nothing of the kind. In the story it is true that during his first encounter with the man Dreiser appears to resent his authoritative attitude as he urges his workers on, and shouts various instructions to them. But the narrator soon realises that at the bottom of such authority lies good-heartedness. In his essay Dreiser shows great admiration for mighty Rourke and almost idealises his qualities. Foreman Rourke takes his work to heart and repeats proudly that he always gets up at four o'clock in the morning to be at his work at seven. Another characteristic of the man which also impressed Dreiser was his fatherly and "charming attitude towards his men" (p.297) most of whom were Italians. Rourke's dealings with his Italian workers are often humorous. Dreiser indeed relates an episode, where mighty Rourke gets very angry with one of his Italian workers, which brings the humour of the story to a climax. However, in spite of its humour, the story ends sadly with the death of the good Rourke. Dreiser seems to have devised such an ending for his story in order to emphasize Rourke's qualities. Rourke shows once again his noble characteristics when from under the rubble, after the explosion which destroyed the building he

was raising with his Italian workers, he urges his rescuers to save the other workers instead. In the description of the foreman's funeral Dreiser pays him a moving tribute, so that mighty Rourke emerges as a hero in the full sense of the word. Dreiser emphasizes the heroic image of mighty Rourke by describing the deep sorrow of the Italian families who attend the funeral of their foreman and neighbour.

The closest Dreiser comes to treating the problem of labour and capital in his novels is in Sister Carrie (1900) and in The 'Genius' (1915). In Sister Carrie Dreiser devotes a whole chapter to the description of the motormen's strike in Brooklyn. The strike itself has no central importance, and its description in Sister Carrie does not even make the conflict between labour and capital a sub-theme in this novel. The strike is only significant in so far as it is one of the episodes in Hurstwood's decline. Nevertheless it is interesting to look closely at the description of this strike, since it reveals Dreiser's attitude towards the subject of labour. The treatment of the motormen's strike shows that Dreiser was well acquainted with the labour upheavals, even at the time of writing Sister Carrie. The strike that Dreiser describes in his novel could be indeed one of the many strikes that broke out at the end of the nineteenth century in America. In fact Hurstwood learns about the motormen's strike and its consequences through various newspapers

which reported the event. Like many of the strikes of the time, the motormen's strike, as is suggested in Sister Carrie, has its origin in a dispute over wage increases and the ten hour day. The company, as it frequently happened, flatly refused to grant the workers' demands. When he reads about the strike, Hurstwood sees the justice of the workers' demands and comes to sympathise with them. Hurstwood's position towards the strikers appears as a crucial question. Dreiser writes,

Hurstwood at first sympathised with the demands of these men - indeed it is a question whether he did not always sympathise with them to the end, belie him as his actions might.³⁷

Hurstwood's attitude towards the motormen's strike is also important because it reflects to a large extent Dreiser's own position. The above statement could well apply to Dreiser himself. If in spite of his first sympathies with the strikers there remains a seeming doubt about Hurstwood's full support of the motormen, it is because he gets involved, as Dreiser's statement suggests, in compromising activities. Hurstwood's sympathies with the motormen are speedily undermined when he takes the opportunity offered by the strike to seek a job in the Brooklyn motor car company, and thus becomes a scab. Given the dreary conditions which Hurstwood experiences, his becoming a scab is quite understandable. Dreiser makes it clear that Hurstwood is led in spite of himself to such an action. He also stresses his hero's dilemma and

helplessness. Throughout the strike, while showing Hurstwood acting as scab, Dreiser also shows him resenting his action. He says about Hurstwood, "In his heart of hearts he sympathised with the strikers and hated this scab". (p.413) To some extent Hurstwood's dilemma illustrates Dreiser's conflict in his early literary career. Because of his devotion to the naturalistic theories, Dreiser could not treat the socio-economic issues he dealt with in his novels with a certain commitment, although he gave merciless descriptions of them.

In his description of the motormen's strike Dreiser catches the spirit which characterised the many strike of end-of-the-century America by showing especially how violent they were. Violence, as Dreiser reveals, occurs in the strikes because of the employers' use of scab labour and the troops. Hurstwood, who because of the company's guaranteed protection ventures as scab, speedily realises that the strike is a "tough game". Hurstwood is badly injured by the angry strikers who are determined to defend their rights in spite of the police ruthless attacks. Dreiser depoliticizes the function of the crowd, and turns them instead into an image of Naturalism. He describes the strikers as a "swarm of bees" and shows their fierce struggle for survival by stressing especially their violent clashes with the police. This unfortunate experience leads Hurstwood to sympathise even more with the strikers, especially after hearing them pleading helplessly. After

his venture Dreiser shows Hurstwood in his flat reading the news about the strike, and states "it was the one thing he read with absorbing interest". (p.430) This may indicate that after his experience as scab, Hurstwood is no longer interested in the strike because it offers him the opportunity to get a job, but because of a genuine concern for the workers' fate.

In The 'Genius' (1915) the treatment of the labour problem is limited once more to the description of Dreiser's experience on the New York Central railroad. As was the case in 'The Toil of the Laborer' and 'The Mighty Burke', in this autobiographical novel Dreiser drew heavily on the material he recorded in An Amateur Laborer. Hence in his labour days, Eugene Witla, the hero, goes almost exactly through the same phases that Dreiser experienced. Like Dreiser, Eugene's search for a job is prompted by his illness and his financial difficulties. Like Dreiser, Eugene also suffers from neurasthenia, and shows various symptoms of physical and mental illnesses, which made it difficult for him to pursue his artistic career. Thus he also ends up as a day labourer in a railroad workshop. Eugene's beginnings as a manual labourer are equally difficult. However, although he finds the work in the little shop hard and somehow disheartening, Eugene Witla, unlike Dreiser, does not resent the company of the other workers, and establishes with them a friendship. "Eugene" as Dreiser writes, "was himself intensely interested in the

men".³⁸ Eugene's interest in the labour world is reflected in the sketching he does of Fornes, the blacksmith, and Jimmy Sudds, his assistant, while they are working. That Eugene becomes interested in the workers and chooses to sketch a labour scene is important for at least two reasons. First it reflects a change in Dreiser's attitude towards the workers' world. Dreiser no longer views it negatively, and through his character he somehow feels closer to it. Second it emphasizes Eugene's artistic leaning and gives an idea about his conception of art. Eugene, as Dreiser suggests throughout the description of his hero's career, has strong affinities with the painters of 'the Ash-Can School', and his paintings emerge because of the subjects he depicts and the technique with which they are executed, as similar to the works of the 'Ash-Can School' painters. Dreiser even attributes some of the works of these painters to his hero. Moreover in his essay, 'Dreiser's The 'Genius' and Everett Shinn, 'The Ash-Can' Painter' (1952)³⁹, Joseph Kwiat has demonstrated that Eugene was modelled on the Ash-Can painter Everett Shinn whom Dreiser had known personally. His suggestion was, however, contested by other critics who have argued that Dreiser took as example for his hero John Sloan, also an Ash-Can painter.⁴⁰ But these critics agree that Dreiser had a long companionship with the Ash-Can painters, and that he shared some of their views on art and the choice of their subject-matter.

The Ash-Can School was constituted by a group of young painters, five of whom (Robert Henri, William J. Glackens, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan) became famous at the beginning of the twentieth century. Like some of the American writers of the time such as Dreiser, Stephen Crane, and Frank Norris they were influenced by the doctrines of realism, and broke with the traditional art forms. They became increasingly concerned with the darker side of American society, and sought to reproduce more popular and everyday life scenes. Their art theory is clearly emphasized by their leader, Robert Henri, in the following quotation:

In this country we have no need of art as a culture; no need of art as a refined and elegant performance; no need for art for poetry's sake, or any of these things for their own sake. What we need is art that expresses the spirit of the people today.⁴¹

Hence Jerome Meyers, for instance, depicted scenes from the New York working class, while Luks, Glackens, and Shinn, portrayed people in the city streets, the beaches and the parks. John Sloan, the most radical of the group, captured in his paintings aspects from both the way of life of the lower class and the upper class in order to illustrate the contrast between the rich and the poor.

By modelling his character on one of the painters of this school and showing his interest in the workers, Dreiser seems to share the belief of the Ash-Can artists in

the "idea of art as a social force"⁴² and their emphasis on the social responsibilities of the artist. At the end of the novel, when after his difficulties Eugene returns gradually to his art, he proves once again his inclinations for representing the common people. As Dreiser states, "... he chose models from the streets, laborers, washer-women, drunkards".⁴³ The friendship established between Eugene and the other workers which symbolises as it were the complementarity between the artist and the people is clearly reflected in the enthusiastic remarks about the picture. Moreover the subject of the picture and the workers' enthusiastic response to the portrait because it was 'life-like' seem to suggest the purpose of art as was conceived by the Ash-Can painters.

In his description of Eugene's labour experiences Dreiser also includes the episode of the Irish foreman that he related in 'The Mighty Burke'. Although Dreiser changes the foreman's name to Deegan he shows once again qualities which Eugene also greatly admires. Like Dreiser, Eugene is also fascinated by the foreman's working methods, and delights in the friendly and humorous atmosphere created by Deegan and his Italian workers. Similarly most of the dialogue that runs between Deegan and Eugene is transposed from Dreiser's conversation with his Irish foreman, as was recorded in 'The Mighty Burke'.

These are then the few works in which Dreiser touched on the problem of labour and capital. Even in these works, except for 'The Toil of the Laborer' this theme was not the central issue. Hence in spite of the Pittsburgh journalist's claims and Sinclair's suggestion, Dreiser could never bring himself to write the great American labour novel.

Unlike Dreiser, Sinclair (as he stated in his letter to Dreiser) had made the conflict between labour and capital if not the main subject in many of his novels, then an important issue. The Jungle (1906), King Coal (1917), Oil (1927) and Boston (1928), to mention Sinclair's most important novels only, deal with the poor working and living conditions of the wage slaves and their clashes with their exploiters. Moreover in these novels Sinclair shows the big capitalists' ruthless practices when dealing with the workers, and launches his attacks on industrial capitalism. Hence as far as the treatment of the conflict between labour and capital is concerned, these novels are to some degree similar. In the following we shall limit ourselves to the study of King Coal and The Jungle, not only because they emerge as Upton Sinclair's best novels, but also because the problem of labour and capital is dealt with more extensively in these two novels.

Perhaps more than The Jungle, King Coal emerges as Sinclair's labour novel 'par excellence'. In The Jungle, the treatment of the labour issue has an important place,

but it is shared in its importance with the treatment of immigration which is in fact the major theme in this novel. In King Coal the immigrant theme is also significant, since almost all the workers of North Valley are immigrants. However the conflict between labour and capital is certainly at the centre of the novel, and Sinclair's interest in these immigrants is primarily as workers. Moreover, Sinclair's first aim in this novel was to fictionalize the Colorado mine strike and its tragic consequences.

The story of North Valley miners in King Coal is a vivid illustration of the labour upheavals which characterised turn of the century America. Through it Sinclair manages to show clearly the nature of the conflict between labour and capital. The fact that Sinclair based his novel on a real event, and especially that he undertook a thorough investigation about this event has helped him a great deal. As was the case with the French naturalists, documentation and experimentation of the conditions to be described were also the major work instruments of the American realist-naturalist writers such as, Dreiser and Upton Sinclair. The documentary and experimental methods often helped these writers to acquire a first hand knowledge of their subjects and to give a detailed treatment of them.

As is the case with the immigrant issue in The Jungle, Sinclair tackles the labour problem in King Coal at its origin. Then he minutely exposes the various developments which lead to the climax, as represented by the break out of the strike, and shows how the conflict in this novel reaches its denouement. Hence in the first part of the novel we are introduced (as Hal Warner, the hero, becomes gradually acquainted with them) to the working and living conditions of North Valley miners. Sinclair makes it clear that the conditions in which North Valley workers live and work are "beneath human dignity". How poor such conditions are is best expressed through Hal Warner's sudden and rather naive realization that in America some people are so deprived and have to toil from dawn to dusk with their children in order to avoid starvation. The effect of the miners' situation is all the more shocking for Hal Warner since he is able to judge for himself the wide gap between his aristocratic class's luxurious and idle way of life and the catastrophic conditions of miners who have to struggle everyday for their survival. Hal Warner's contact with these conditions provokes his immediate reaction and by the same token starts to convert him to the workers' cause. He wonders "what was the force that kept men at such a task"⁴⁴ and concludes that "it would be a good thing if we had a little shaking up here in North Valley". (p.79)

Sinclair does not fail to show that the organisation of the miners of North Valley into a union is a hard task for his hero. How big the obstacles facing Sinclair's enthusiastic hero in this mission are is a matter which is at the heart of Hal Warner's discussion with Olson, himself a labour organizer. Unlike the inexperienced Hal Warner, Olson is well aware of the difficulties that the organisation of North Valley miners presents, and cautions the young man against the negative consequences than an attempt in this line may entail. Olson's analysis of the situation is furthermore important, since through it Sinclair exposes some of the difficulties which characterised the American labour movement and restricted its actions. The major difficulty in organizing the miners, as Olson explains, lies in the fact that they are immigrants who are unable to overcome their language barriers.

Your worst troubles are inside the heads of the fellows you're trying to help: Have you ever thought what it would mean to try to explain things to men who speak twenty different languages. (p.82)

As Sinclair also shows there are many rivalries between these ethnic communities "whose race-feelings seemed stronger than their class-feelings". (p.66) Moreover they often mistrust the labour organizations whose functions and benefits they are generally unaware of. Hal Warner

himself acknowledges this fact; "Some people don't like the idea of a union. They think it means tyranny and violence". (p.87)

Hal Warner's conversation with Olson provides him with further insights into the strategies of labour organisation and the pitfalls of the conflict between labour and capital. But if the organisation of the miners of North Valley into a labour union seems a hard task to achieve, Hal Warner is determined to organise at least the committee which would discuss with the company the workers' right to a checkweighman. Sinclair turns Hal Warner's fight over the checkweighman issue into a fantastic adventure. He shows his hero going through a series of violent clashes with the G.F.C. (General Fuel Company) authorities. Sinclair's description of the camp marshall's breathless chasing of Hal Warner, the instigator of the checkweighman movement, and his brutal determination to drive him out of North Valley are also a source of the great excitement that characterises the fight. In his description of these clashes Sinclair also stresses the courageous and heroic qualities of his protagonist. Clearly, because of his daring attitude, Hal Warner appears from Sinclair's account as a kind of Robin Hood who takes the defense of the oppressed at heart. Sinclair achieves such an effect principally by showing Hal Warner fighting the G.F.C. officials almost on his own. The miners of North Valley are only occasionally made reference to in

this fight. He also reflects his hero's disdain for the personal threats addressed to him by the company's guards, and shows his intention to ridicule them. Hal Warner appears as an eloquent hero who is never afraid to point out ironically the contradictions of the capitalist foundations, and condemn the big businessmen's exploitation of the workers.

Amid the row over the checkweighman issue the explosion in the mine adds fuel to the fire. Through the narration of this event and Hal Warner's increasing entanglement with his employers, Sinclair also exposes political corruption as illustrated by the alliance between the political authorities and the G.F.C. In order to put out the fire and avoid further damages to their property, the company officials seal the mine immediately leaving thus about a hundred men trapped in it. In face of the miners' families helpless lamentations and the employers' cruel decision to sacrifice human lives in order to save their interests, Hal Warner decides to bring the matter before the local authorities and have them open the mine. However, in his efforts to do so Hal Warner speedily realises that "the government here is simply a department of the G.F.C.". (p.213) Wherever he goes to seek help he is received with great reluctance and shown an unwillingness to intervene in the matter. Even the press would not bother to report the news about the tragic event in North Valley. As he did in an essay entitled 'Press and

Labor',⁴⁵ Sinclair also shows in King Coal that the papers are often owned by the big businessmen, hence their hostility to the workers. It is also interesting to note that the description of Hal Warner's efforts to draw the attention of the press to the mine explosion in North Valley recalls Sinclair's own efforts to get the papers report about the Ludlow massacre. As was the case with the Ludlow massacre, in King Coal the news about the mine explosion is reported by some of the socialist papers only.

The checkweighman issue and the consequences of the mine explosion set among the miners of North Valley a growing awareness of their situation as workers, and kindled a general desire to stop the G.F.C.'s ruthless exploitation. Sinclair even suggests that the obstacles which prevented the miners from organising have been overcome, and that North Valley is entering a new phase of its life by showing a certain solidarity between immigrant workers. However, As Sinclair also shows, in spite of their solidarity and their determination to have their demands implemented, the strikers fail to break the company's intransigence because they could not get the full support of the big union, that is the United Mine Workers of America.

Although the strike ends with failure, the end of King Coal is not as pessimistic and as fatalistic as the end of Zola's Germinal (1885). In Germinal, Zola's position is indeed very ambiguous. Though he attacks the

rise of capitalism it is this latter rather than the working classes, as the title might suggest, which triumph at the end of the novel. Far from achieving the demands of the miners, the strike reinforced instead the powers of the bourgeoisie. The miners' failure and their submission are complete. Souvarine and Etienne Lantier, who adopted a hard line to oppose the company, leave Montsoue almost turned out by the angry workers, whereas Rasseneur, a moderate, establishes his influence on the miners' organisation and becomes more powerful. The triumph of capitalism is also reflected through those miners who went back to the mine "la tête baissée". Even la Maheude, who lost three children in the strike, finds after all that the company's officials "se sont montrés très bons". The naive and fatalistic attitude of la Maheude leads her even to the point of excluding any human action from the struggle.

Bien sûr qu'ils (the bourgeoisie) en seraient punis un jour, car tout se paie. On aurait pas même besoin de s'en mêler.⁴⁶

However, in King Coal, in spite of the failure of the strike, Sinclair leaves great hopes about the future of the miners, and seems to turn their defeat into a victory. The victory for the miners of North Valley lies indeed in the fact that they acquired a certain class-consciousness and new experience as a result of this strike. The miners of North Valley do not go back to their work with their heads down but with the conviction that with a better organ-

isation and the support of their big union the G.F.C. will submit to their demands. That another big strike which will end the workers' exploitation will occur in North Valley appears indeed as a certainty. Hal Warner stresses the point to Mary Burke in the following quotation:

When the big strike comes, as we know it's coming in this coal country, I'll be here to do my share. (p.379)

Although in King Coal Upton Sinclair renders some of the important phases which characterised the conflict between labour and capital in America adequately, his novel is not without flaws. One of the major weaknesses lies with the hero, Hal Warner. Sinclair's choice of an inexperienced aristocrat to arouse the workers' consciousness, and lead their fight against their oppressors somehow lessens the forcefulness of the story and its credibility. Naturally in King Coal Sinclair is once again faithful to his technical device, which is to show his hero's conversion from an upper-class personage, or admirer of capitalism, to socialism, after experiencing the evil consequences of the former economic system. However, at the end of the novel one wonders whether Hal Warner's role as a strike leader is the result of his strong socio-political understanding of the situation, and if his complete conversion to the workers' cause and the cause of socialism has really occurred.

Sinclair's choice of Hal Warner as a hero in this novel is rather inadequate because Hal Warner does not have anything in common with the miners of North Valley. He belongs to the aristocratic class who are exploiting the people he wants to help. A product of this class, his upbringing and ideas are naturally shaped by its ideals and values. Hence they are likely to be in direct opposition to the ideals of the working class. Such an inadequacy is further emphasized by the fact that until the first weeks he spends in North Valley, Hal Warner is totally ignorant of the working and living conditions of the miners and the conflict between labour and capital. Moreover at the beginning of the novel there are no indications about Hal Warner's ideas or socio-political beliefs which show him as a social reformer, or qualify him as a potential strike leader. In Zola's Germinal, for instance, Etienne Lantier - whose arrival **in** the mining camps of Mantsoue recalls Hal Warner's arrival **in** North Valley - is a poor working-class young man who has a certain experience of the labour world, and the clashes which opposed the workers to their employers. Although he is not himself originally a miner, Etienne Lantier feels that he is one of the miners of Mantsoue, and identifies himself with them because of his class-consciousness.

To Upton Sinclair, Hal Warner's social background and his inexperience in the labour problem do not seem to constitute any obstacle. After his acquaintance with the

miners working and living conditions, Hal Warner rebels against the employers' ruthless exploitation of the miners, and is presented as a conscious social reformer. However, the end of the novel suggests that Sinclair fails to make Hal Warner a socialist hero who is genuinely interested in fighting for the social revolution in order to establish justice and equality. When the strike is over Hal Warner does not remain in North Valley to devote himself to the workers' cause. He returns instead to his aristocratic milieu. Moreover, as Sinclair shows, Hal Warner's romance with Mary Burke, the working-class girl who becomes his co-leader in the strike, ends abruptly because he loves Jessie Arthur, an aristocratic young lady, and could not be unfaithful to her. Although at the end of the novel Hal Warner reiterates his support to the miners, his sojourn in North Valley and the events he experiences appear indeed as an adventurous escapade.

The working and living conditions of the labour force in America have certainly never been laid so bare, and with such directness in American novels as in The Jungle. Sinclair's descriptions of the workers' conditions in the Chicago meat-packing houses are furthermore revealing and emerge as an important document on the difficulties characterising the labour world, since they were authenticated by governmental investigation. In spite of the great uproar caused by its publication, The Jungle did not, however, have the effects expected by Upton Sinclair, that

is to reach the hearts of the people, and especially to bring about immediate changes of the working conditions in the slaughter houses of Chicago. But the failure to achieve these expectations does not reduce the importance of The Jungle in the least. The merit of The Jungle lies in the fact that it revealed to the American people a grave situation they had always ignored because it had never been reported by their national media. It indicated for the first time that labour slavery in a prosperous country like America was not a matter of fiction but a dark reality. Similarly it also revealed that labour upheavals were not simply the work of a bunch of 'Reds' or 'Anarchists' who, as has been often suggested, sought to disrupt American economy, and endanger its democratic values. Rather the violent strikes, as Sinclair shows in The Jungle, express the ardent desire of a whole deprived class in America to recover its human dignity and to have a fair share of the wealth it produced. Through the description of the dehumanizing conditions in which Jurgis and other immigrants work, Sinclair also makes it clear that the threat to American democratic institutions comes not from the underprivileged but from those who own the means of production, and exploit their fellow countrymen ruthlessly and shamelessly to enjoy a luxurious way of life.

The Jungle has often been criticized for the very reasons which made its success. It has been suggested that the main weakness of The Jungle lies in the fact that

the series of misfortunes which befall the Lithuanian family, and the description of the working and living conditions in the Chicago stockyards, lessen the credibility of this novel.⁴⁷ Such conditions however, as we have seen earlier, were authenticated by government inspectors, while the fate of the Lithuanian family is not as exaggerated as it may appear at first sight. Many of the immigrant families in America, as various works on the subject of immigration show, were driven to despair by similar catastrophic conditions. The weakness of The Jungle is rather technical. Sinclair's problem lies in his inability to bridge the gap between the fatalistic naturalism that characterises the novel and his optimistic socialism.

Like Germinal, The Jungle is a fatalistic novel, and in it Sinclair also denies every human will. Thus he jeopardises his belief in the individual to change the capitalist foundations of society. The members of the Lithuanian family, for example, are shown accepting all their miseries with resignation, and clinging to their naive belief in a brighter future. They never try to fight the cause of their difficulties, that is the ruthless exploiters of the Chicago meat-packing houses, and indeed ruthless capitalism. It is true that throughout The Jungle Jurgis shows a strong willingness to improve his family's situation and to triumph over the forces which drag them down by repeating after every misfortune that

befalls them, "I will work harder". However by stressing Jurgis's willingness to overcome his difficulties Sinclair is only being ironic about his hero's naiveté and his ignorance. As he shows, all Jurgis's efforts prove useless, and his helplessness in face of these destroying forces is complete. Even after the series of misfortunes which culminate in the death of his wife, Ona, when Jurgis realises how desperate his situation was, and for the first time revolts against his lot, his revolt is not characterised by a reforming action or an attempt to solve his difficulties. Sinclair's hero takes instead to alcohol and gives vent to his anger not by turning against his oppressors, but by destroying rows of small peach trees. Jurgis's revolt is helpless.

The hero of The Jungle is an even weaker creation of Sinclair than Hal Warner in King Coal. Although he is a proletarian worker who is savagely exploited by the big businessmen, Jurgis has no consciousness whatsoever of his situation, or any idea about the labour problem. The working class girl, Mary Burke, in King Coal shows more class-consciousness than Jurgis, and plays an important role in the fight against the company's employers to improve the workers' conditions. Since Jurgis, as is shown through Sinclair's descriptions, experiences a series of hardships in the stockyards and has an insight into the ruthless methods of capitalism, he emerges as a potential working-class hero who could lead his fellow workers to

defend their interests. However, not only does Sinclair fail to make of him a conscious labour leader, but he also excludes him from any eventual action or solution that would change his situation. Two examples from The Jungle will illustrate this point. First Sinclair's fictionalisation of the 'Great Beef strike' occurs at a point where Jurgis's misfortunes have already reached their highest. Yet when the strike breaks out Jurgis is not shown with his fellow workers fighting for the implementation of their demands and the employers' ruthless intransigence. Instead he acts against the interests of his class and shows a complete lack of solidarity with the other workers by becoming scab. Second, in the socialist meeting closing the novel, which he attends after his conversion, Jurgis is kept out of the conversation and his presence is hardly noticed. It is instead the group of intellectuals - whom Sinclair introduces at the end of the novel, and who have no link with the plot of the story - who discuss socialism and its advantageous solutions for the betterment of the lower classes' conditions.

Undoubtedly this dose of socialist propaganda at the end of the novel lessens the effect of The Jungle. Such an ending shows Sinclair's failure to include his socialist beliefs in the story itself or integrate them with his characters. Sinclair's powerful descriptions of his heroes' difficulties and the dehumanising working conditions in the stockyards leave no doubt about the

plausibility of Jurgis's conversion, or the presentation of socialism as a solution to the evil consequences of capitalism. Sinclair's conclusions, however, remain as it were at the theoretical level. None of Sinclair's characters, for instance, speaks about socialism in the story, or appears as a potential socialist and class conscious hero. Hence to the unbridgeable gap between naturalism and socialism must be added the unbridgeable gap between Sinclair's theoretical beliefs and their adequate representation in his fiction.

CONCLUSION

Like various other spheres of American life, the intellectual, artistic, and literary spheres were deeply affected by the huge transformations of the Gilded Age. The impact of these changes in these areas was clearly reflected in the emergence of new currents of thoughts and new modes of literary and artistic expressions. They all demonstrated a feeling of uneasiness and an increasing concern with the prevailing situation. The new developments had cast doubts about the validity of American values and the future of America itself. Yet amid the general atmosphere of anxiety and uncertainty individual reactions to the new order varied greatly and were often conflicting. For example, Peter Conn, who studied America's ideology and imagination in the light of the unprecedented changes of the 1880s and 1890s, has emphasized the patterns of contrariety and concluded that the American mind in the period under review was indeed a divided mind.¹

Our study has been placed to a large extent in this context since it explores an example of this divided mind. It has been an attempt to compare and contrast the literary and ideological responses of Dreiser and Sinclair to the socio-economic upheavals of the Gilded Age, and to analyse the position they held respectively in this conflicting debate. Like many American philosophers, artists, and writers, Dreiser and Sinclair reflected on the consequences

of the large scale industrialisation and took a significant part in the literary and ideological debate in America at that time.

Dreiser's and Sinclair's importance in American literature has often been dealt with. In our study we have also shown briefly the prominent role played by the two writers in promoting the literature of their country. Dreiser and Sinclair, as has been shown, made themselves known mostly because of their deep involvement in the socio-economic problems of America. They took upon themselves the task of denouncing these problems and gave a detailed picture of the conditions prevailing in their country at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century. Because of their constant denunciation of the evil consequences of industrial capitalism, Dreiser and Sinclair have often been seen as leading a similar battle against the injustices prevailing in America, and have been closely compared. One of the important comparisons between Dreiser and Sinclair was made by Henry Steele Commager who suggested that the two writers were the most prominent critics of American society.² Some of their works, as he also pointed out, have many aspects in common, especially the merciless exposition of America's dark realities. Yet, while drawing a parallel between Dreiser and Sinclair, Henry Steele Commager also stressed their profound philosophical differences. If Dreiser and Sinclair were disheartened by

the socio-economic problems of America and made them the focus of their novels, their attitude towards these problems and the manner with which they treated them, set indeed the two writers apart.

To some extent Commager's suggestions have been also the subject of our analysis. Through the study of Dreiser's and Sinclair's treatment of the immigrant, the city, the business tycoon, women, and the labour problem, we have shown the range of the socio-economic problems which attracted the two writers' concern, and the extent of their interest in these problems. Such upheavals are mirrored in the novels of Dreiser and Sinclair and give a larger insight into the picture of conditions that both of them recorded to show to their readers one of the most important phases of American history. Although they appear in both Sinclair's and Dreiser's novels they are not, however, dealt with in the same depth and manner. It has been shown, for instance, that apart from his treatment of the business tycoon in the 'Trilogy of Desire' and the city which is the setting of most of his novels, Dreiser hardly makes the other themes the focus of his novels. On the contrary each of Sinclair's novels analysed in this study is devoted to the treatment of a particular socio-economic issue and sometimes has other issues as subthemes.

As emerges from the foregoing study, Sinclair's lengthy treatment of the immigrant, the city, the business tycoon, women, and the labour problem, tends to converge

towards two well-known purposes which made the writer's reputation. Once again through the treatment of these socio-economic issues Sinclair is mostly concerned with exposing the evil effects of capitalism and launching his attacks against this economic system. Sinclair also uses these issues to ask for social reforms and to present socialism as the ideal solution for America's problems. A brief summary of our analysis of Sinclair's treatment of these themes will again emphasize this point.

Sinclair's minute descriptions of the working and living conditions of the immigrant characters in The Jungle and of the miners of North Valley in King Coal leave no doubt about their miserable situations and the ruthless exploitation of capitalism. The importance of the two groups in these novels does not however exceed their roles as the victims of the big businessmen's avid accumulation of wealth. Sinclair presents them as passive and helpless characters who are not even able to improve their situations. In The Jungle the story of the immigrant family is also compromised by the socialist propaganda of the end of the novel which shows clearly Sinclair's real aim. The themes of The Metropolis, Oil!, and Sylvia's Marriage also work the same objectives. Through his descriptions of the idle way of life of New York's upper classes and of their grand mansions, Sinclair shows the huge discrepancies between rich and poor. Like Dreiser, Sinclair also describes the magical aspects of the city and

its wealth, but these appear to him as evil results of the capitalist system. Far from being attracted by the wealth and the idle pleasures of city life, Sinclair's hero, Alan Montague, turns his back on them and goes on to fight for social reforms. Although Sinclair shows an overt hostility towards capitalism, he gives in Oil! a sympathetic picture of its exponent, the business tycoon. However, if Sinclair gives such a picture of his oil operator, nevertheless he does not fail to lay bare the corruption and the immoral practices of the business milieu. Finally, Sinclair also blames women's conditions in America on the capitalist exploitation. Through the story of Sylvia van Tuiver he shows the bourgeois capitalist treatment of women and their desire to keep them submitted to their socio-economic conventions. Once again in this case, it is only when Sinclair's heroine discovers socialism that she wakes up to her condition and revolts against her petty milieu.

Sinclair's criticism of capitalism and his preaching of the socialist doctrine through the treatment of these issues is technically emphasized by the conversion of his hero (or heroine) from an upper class character or a supporter of capitalism to socialism and the defense of the lower classes' cause. Their conversion to socialism appears very often plausible because Sinclair describes in detail their disheartening contacts with the disastrous consequences of capitalism. However there remains a serious doubt about the role of these heroes and heroines

as the promoters of the socialist revolution since they are sometimes shown as passive characters (e.g. Jurgis) or lacking strong socialist beliefs. Moreover the upper class background of some of these characters (e.g. Hal Warner, Sylvia, Cornellia and Bunny) also seems to constitute another serious obstacle.

Dreiser's treatment of the same socio-economic issues is immune from the kind of overt anti-capitalist propaganda which characterises Sinclair's handling of them. Yet like Sinclair, through his analysis Dreiser also reveals the negative impact of capitalism on the American society. In 'The Trilogy of Desire', for example, Dreiser also gives a sympathetic picture of his business tycoon, Frank Cowperwood, and stresses his promethean figure. He even shows a certain admiration for Frank Cowperwood and his real models. However through Cowperwood's business activities Dreiser does not fail to show the malpractices of the business milieu and its ruthlessness. In some of his descriptions Dreiser even devoids this milieu of any human motives, and reduces it to a mere jungle which is governed by the law of the survival of the fittest. Dreiser also meets Sinclair in his depiction of the city as a place of terror which has destructive effects on people. Sister Carrie, in spite of her seeming success, and especially Hurstwood, find it difficult to adapt to the urban environment and have to submit to its exigencies. Like Sinclair, Dreiser also presents the city as a land of

profound contrasts and where poverty is a part of its everyday life. Through his account of Hurstwood's decline and sufferings, Dreiser gives an unequivocal description of the darker side of the city. However the city in Dreiser's novels does not emerge solely as an evil place. It is also a land of mystery, wonder, and wealth. Dreiser's descriptions of Sister Carrie's rise in Chicago and New York reflect the glittering and attractive aspects of the city and stresses its perception as a 'symbol of the possible'. Through the stories of his two main heroines, Sister Carrie and Jennie Gerhardt, Dreiser also comes to grips with the restraining social conventions of the American middle class bourgeoisie and ridicules them. A parallel can be even drawn between Sister Carrie and Sinclair's heroine, Sylvia van Tuiver. Both of them defy the established social conventions and appear, to some extent, as examples of the 'New Woman'. Both heroines also carry the ideas of their creators. As was the case with Dreiser, Sister Carrie is fascinated by wealth and power, and is often shown pursuing the American dream of success. Sylvia, like Upton Sinclair, converts to socialism and goes on to fight for the ideals of justice and equality.

In his desire to treat the socio-economic problems of America with detachment and keep a degree of 'objectivity' Dreiser sometimes hardly dealt with the most important issues of the Gilded Age. This is what emerges specially

from our analysis of Dreiser's treatment of the immigrant and the labour problem. Immigrants do appear in Dreiser's novels, however the writer does not deal with them as such. If Dreiser sometimes mentions the immigrant origins of one of his characters he does this within the context of a detailed description to show, for example, the socio-economic ascension of the personage. The Irish Edward Malia Butler (The Financier) and McKenty (The Titan) are cases in point. Dreiser's reference to the immigrant sometimes serves to enlarge the picture that he wants to give of the American society. It is only when he deals with William Gerhardt (Jennie Gerhardt) that Dreiser seems to show a certain interest in the immigrant. Dreiser always refers to the immigrant origins of his hero and shows his German habits. However even in this case it would seem that Dreiser treats William Gerhardt as an immigrant because he modelled him on his own father, himself a German. Another aspect which shows Dreiser's neglect of this issue is his failure to deal with the working and living conditions of the immigrants.

Although Dreiser had a first-hand knowledge of the labour situation in America and had experienced the harshness of the working conditions in his labour days, he failed to dramatize this problem in his novels. Even after his increasing involvement in the labour question through his investigations in the Kentucky and Pennsylvania coal strikes, the great American labour novel that Dreiser

had in mind never came to fruition. Attempts have been made by Dreiser to write a novel about the labour question but he left most of the work he started unfinished. It is only in Sister Carrie and The 'Genius' among his fictional works where Dreiser touched very briefly on the labour issue. But even in these cases it is not out of a genuine concern that Dreiser did so. As has been shown, although Dreiser describes it minutely, the strike in Sister Carrie is only used to show another phase in Hurstwood's decline. Since The 'Genius' is mostly an autobiographical novel, it is his experience as a manual labourer on the New York Central railroad that Dreiser describes in this novel.

Dreiser's and Sinclair's responses to these socio-economic issues and their literary treatment of them are to a large extent determined by their respective views on art and their ideological beliefs. Dreiser limits himself to the exposition of the evil consequences of capitalism and does not ask for social reforms because he believed that art should not be used as a means of propaganda or to further personal ideological ideals. He also believed that 'the higher phases of imaginative art have nothing in common ... with social amelioration as an end or motive'.³ Dreiser's lack of artistic commitment is only equalled by his political absence in the early years of his literary career. Dreiser's adoption of naturalism as a philosophy of life had kept him away from the American

political scene for a long time, and led him to respond to the socio-economic problems of his country very ambiguously.

Sinclair's literary and socio-political views contrast sharply with Dreiser's. Unlike Dreiser, Sinclair firmly believed that 'all art is propaganda'⁴ and that it must be used as a weapon in the class struggle. Such a belief, Sinclair had never ceased to practice in his novels. For one thing he had always used as subject matter of his novels the 'two nations theme' to show the socio-economic discrepancies between rich and poor and ask for reforms. For another Sinclair had used his novels to express his political beliefs and preach the socialist ideals. Sinclair, unlike Dreiser, was also politically committed and devoted himself to ensure the advancement of his beliefs. It is the combination of his political and artistic commitment which colours Sinclair's treatment of the socio-economic problems of America.

Unlike Emma Goldman and Henry James, Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair cannot be taken as examples to show the two extreme poles of America's divided mind at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵ However the two writers do illustrate in many ways the conflicting ideological and literary temperament of the time. Although Dreiser and Sinclair showed great concern with the socio-economic problems of their country, they were deeply divided in their political responses to these problems and

their literary treatment of them. The difference in the two writers' respective attitude is clearly embodied in that unbridgeable gap between, on the one hand, the pessimistic determinist who lost faith in any improvement of the catastrophic conditions of his society, and on the other hand, the socialist reformer who never ceased to fight for an equal and just society based on the cooperative system.

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37. Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie, Pennsylvania edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1981), p.409.
38. Theodore Dreiser, The 'Genius' (New York: The World Publishing Company, n.d.), p.323.
39. Joseph Kwiat, 'Dreiser's The 'Genius' and Everett Shinn, "The Ash-Can" Painter'. P.M.L.A., Vol.67, no.2, March 1952, pp.15-31.

40. See for example:

Joel C. Mickelson, 'Correlations Between Art and Literature in Interpreting the American City: Theodore Dreiser and John Sloan', in Images of the American City in the Arts, ed. Joel C. Mickelson (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1978), pp.20-25.

41. Quoted in Patricia Hills, The Painters' America: Rural and Urban Life, 1810-1910 (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1914), p.125.

42. Joseph Kwiat, 'The Social Responsibilities of the American Painter and Writer: Robert Henri and John Sloan; Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser', The Centennial Review, Vol.21, Winter, 1977, p.20.

43. Theodore Dreiser, The 'Genius', p.729.

44. Upton Sinclair, King Coal (New York: Macmillan, 1917), p.31.

45. Upton Sinclair, The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism (Long Beach, Calif: Sinclair, 1928), pp.346-361.

46. Emile Zola, Germinal (Paris: Editions Garnier Freres, 1979), p.497.

47. Arthur H. Quinn, American Fiction: An Historical and Critical Survey (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936), p.653.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. See Peter Conn, The Divided Mind: Ideology and Imagination in America, 1898-1917 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
2. Henry S. Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880s (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p.258.
3. Theodore Dreiser as quoted in R.N.Mookerjee, 'Dreiser's Views on Art and Fiction', American Literary Realism 1870-1900, Vol.12, no.2, Autumn 1979, p.341.
4. Upton Sinclair, Mammonart: An Essay in Economic Interpretation (Pasadena: Sinclair, 1925), p.9.
5. Peter Conn, The Divided Mind, p.316.

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Box 172. Unemployment in America.

Box 176. My City (New York).

Box 183. The Epic Sinclair.

Box 190. Illusion Called Life.

Box 194. The Position of Labor.

Folders 48-50. Dreiser's trip to Russia, 1927-28.

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