

郝斯特伍德： 現實世界中的失敗者

摘要

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西奧多·德塞的嘉麗妹妹自一九零零年出版以來，就一直被批評家熱切的討論著。一方面，這本書是描述嘉麗這位出生貧寒的女孩在大城市中奮鬥成功的故事，另一方面，書中對郝斯特伍德由富而貧的不幸遭遇也有深刻的描述，據唐納德·派樂所說，德塞自己也認為這本書是郝斯特伍德的悲慘故事。一位批評家更宣稱，郝斯特伍德這個角色發展才是整本書的重心。其他如威廉·瑞迪、哈里斯·里昂等人亦持相同看法。由此觀之，郝斯特伍德角色的重要性是無庸置疑的。

與嘉麗比起來，郝斯特伍德的故事更戲劇化，也帶給讀者強烈的悲愴之感，儘管唐納德·派樂認為嘉麗的角色更有深度而耐人尋味，我各人認為，書中對郝斯特伍德內心世界的描寫，他的自傲，激情，與挫折等等，均不比嘉麗的故事稍有遜色。事實上，郝斯特伍德的故事不僅使我們心靈淨化，更讓我們清楚目睹人在無怨，無恨，無情的自然中與命運抗掙的悲壯過程。

為了對郝斯特伍德這個角色有更深刻的認識，並瞭解德塞是如何成功地描繪這個書中人物，我們將詳細的分析郝斯特伍德的心理情結，其中包括他的自傲、不滿、激情、挫折、自我解釋，以至於他最終對生命的眷念與絕望。

George Hurstwood: The loser in the Harsh World

Jory Chuan - hui Hung

Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie has been closely studied and discussed since it was first published in 1900. On the one hand, the book is about Carrie who tries to find a better life for herself in big cities. On the other hand, the book is a story of Hurstwood as well. As Carrie rises from poor status, Hurstwood falls down from his comfortable life to a tragic death. According to Donald Pizer, Dreiser himself, in 1907, called Sister Carrie the story of "the tragedy of a man's life."¹ One critic even claims that the attention of this novel "is focused even more directly on the figure of George Hurstwood than on Carrie herself."² And in William Marion Reedy's words, "it is the delineation of the man's gradual sinking or linking into degradation that the author shows his real power."³ Or, in Harris Merton Lyon's words, "Hurstwood reminds you of yourself, of each one of your friends. He epitomizes your theory of life."⁴ Dreiser's own comments, and the critics' opinions at least show that Hurstwood is an important role in the novel.

In comparison with Carrie's adventures in Chicago and New York, Hurstwood's story is more dramatic and pathetic. As Donald Pizer puts it, Carrie's character is more complex than Hurstwood.⁵ But in my opinion, Hurstwood's inner world, pride passion, and his inner conflicts, are not less powerful than Carrie's ceaseless pursuit of a better life. In fact, Hurstwood's story not only evokes in us a sense of catharsis, but it helps us witness, more

clearly, the indifference of nature to man and man's struggle against his fate. Hurstwood strikes the cores of our hearts by arousing in us a sense of helplessness and irrevocability, and especially a kind of sympathy for the fallen hero.

In order to have a full understanding of Hurstwood, to know how Dreiser delineated this character successfully, we shall try to study Hurstwood's psychic tendencies in detail. These psychic tendencies include Hurstwood's sense of self-importance, pride, dissatisfaction, passion, self-rationalization, inner conflicts, loss and compensation, and above all, his frustration and disillusion of life.

I

When Hurstwood first appears in the story, we find him a man characterized by a strong sense of importance. A person's appearance may speak for his inner state of mind. And in Hurstwood, we may easily find this psychic tendency. Dreiser describes:

At rector's, Drouet had met Mr. G. W. Hurstwood, manager of Fitzgerald and Moy's. He had been pointed out as a very successful and well-known man about town. Hurstwood looked the part, for besides being slightly under forty, he had a good, stout constitution, an active manner, and a solid, substantial air, which was composed in part of his fine clothes, his clean linen, his jewels, and above all, his own sense of his importance. Drouet immediately conceived a notion of him as being some one worth knowing. . . . *

Through Drouet's evaluation, Dreiser tells us that Hurstwood is indeed a man of importance, a man of some achievement. In fact, Hurstwood's job not only requires him to greet his customers with a smiling face, but it can help him find for himself a kind of satisfaction, the satisfaction of being considered important in his working surroundings. As the saloon manager, Hurstwood is the man who can best catch his customers' attention. Thus,

for the most part, he lounges about, "dressed in excellent tailored suits of imported goods, a solitaire ring, a fine blue diamond in his tie, a striking vest of some new pattern, and a watch-chain of solid gold, which held a charm of rich design and a watch of the latest make and engraving" (p. 33).

Though Hurstwood is quite proud of himself, he never loses his scrupulous manners before the people who are more successful than he. Hurstwood has been "well-established" (p. 34) in his career, and he knows to which class he belongs--the first grade below the rich. But because he has risen by perseverance and industry, through long years of service, from the position of barkeeper in a common-place to his present altitude, Hurstwood is experienced enough in knowing how to deal with his customers, curbing his pride successfully without compromising his own opinion. Dreiser describes :

There was a class, however, too rich, too famous, or too successful, with whom he could not attempt any with these he was professionally tactful, assuming a grave and dignified attitude, paying them the deference which would win their good feeling without in the least compromising his own bearing and opinions. (p. 34)

In addition, Hurstwood never loses his sophistication, either, in dealing with ordinary people. Dreiser writes:

He knew by name, and could greet personally with a "well, old fellow," hundreds of actors, merchants, politicians, and the general run of successful characters, and it was part of his success to do so. . . . There were in the last place, a few good followers, neither rich nor poor, famous, nor yet remarkably successful, with whom he would converse longest and most seriously. . . . (pp. 33-34)

Clearly, we may see that Hurstwood's sense of importance and pride have been enveloped in his scrupulousness and his sophisticated manners. To preserve

his career and status, Hurstwood tries to deal with all kinds of people, to participated in social activities with his family, and to win a good reputation for himself. He believes that "A man can't be too careful" (p. 67).

It is true that Hurstwood's career is successful, but his family life can hardly satisfy him. As Dreiser tells us, Hurstwood's residence can "scarcely be said to be infused with home spirit," and it lacks that toleration and regard without which the home is nothing" (p. 63). Thus, when his dissatisfaction arises, he will counterbalance his dissatisfied mood "by his social position and a certain matter of policy" (p.66). Hurstwood is indeed a wise man, for he knows that a man, "to hold his position, must have a dignified manner, a clean record, and a respectable home anchorage" (p. 66). Hurstwood's respectable home anchorage means anything but the joy of life, for which has been discolored by his practical consideration. Dreiser writes:

. . . he was circumspect in all he did, and whenever he appeared in the public ways in the afternoon, or on Sunday, it was with his wife, and sometimes his children. He would visit the local resorts, or those near by in Wisconsin, and spend a few stiff, polished days strolling about conventional places doing conventional things. He knew the need of it. (p. 66)

However, on the other hand, Hurstwood cannot but feel bound up by social expectations, social restrictions, and family duty. Whenever he goes out for a trip alone, he feels emancipated and released. Only when he is out of his house can he escape from the weariness of his family life. He enjoys himself thoroughly, but when the trip is over, he is "sorry to get back" (p. 68). Clearly we can see that there exists a great disparity between what Hurstwood wants to do and what he has to do. Though Hurstwood can sometimes escape from the tension caused by this kind of disparity, his inner dissatisfaction with his family life will be further intensified whenever he tastes the joy of being free. Just as Dreiser says,

Hurstwood will lose his psychic balance when something better is "immediately and sharply contrasted" (p. 66). The more he represses his inner dissatisfaction, the more it will bounce back and threaten his circumspectness which means the principle of his life.

One of the factors that cause Hurstwood's dissatisfaction is his inner passion which has been long inhibited by moral and social restrictions. For many years, Hurstwood has been moving in the dull atmosphere of his family life, bound by social mores that force him to take part in some activities of which he is most tired. This stirs him think think that he has never had any "love affair" since he was married. (p. 90) His wife is selfish and cold, and can hardly satisfy his romantic dream of love. Dreiser describes: "Whenever he thought of it, he told himself that, if he had it to do over again, he would never marry such a woman" (p. 90).

Obviously, deep in his heart, Hurstwood thinks of revolting against the inhibition of his passion. If he can not find a way out for his passion, he will never be able to live contented with his wife. In addition, Hurstwood is only slightly under forty. Sexually, he should be in the prime of his life, and his libido strong. Social restrictions inhibits his behavior, but they can not extinguish his inner flame. On the contrary, his inner flame of passion has only been muffled up. It not only makes Hurstwood more dissatisfied with his wife, but it waits for the chance of burning down his moral fence, of acting out his long repressed romantic dream of love.

It is this burning desire and dissatisfied mood that make Hurstwood so vulnerable to the attraction of Carrie when the beautiful girl stands before him. When Hurstwood meets Carrie for the first time in Drouet's flat, he looks into her eyes and feels that "the subtle waves of young life radiating therefrom," and Carrie's radiating youth of beauty touches him as "a pleasant

thing" (p.79). As a man with feelings of importance and superiority, Hurstwood is not only curious of "how Drouet came to win her" (p. 79), but he is jealous of the drummer. Indeed, in Hurstwood's eyes, Drouet is much inferior to him. Dreiser writes:

He gave Drouet no credit for any feelings toward Carrie whatever. He envied him, and now as he looked at the well-dressed, jolly salesman, whom he so much liked, the gleam of the rival glowed in his eye. He began to "size up" Drouet from the standpoints of wit and fascination. He began to look to see where he was weak. There was no disputing that, whatever he might think of him as a good fellow, he felt a certain amount of contempt for him as a lover. (p. 81)

Clearly, jealousy and contempt both reflect Hurstwood's thought that he is the true worthy lover of such a beauty as Carrie. His intoxication with Carrie seems to set him from all restrictions, at least, temporarily. Driven by his desire, Hurstwood unconsciously begins to examine his friend "with the eye of a hawk" (p. 81), to find a chance to get close to Carrie, namely to find an outlet for his throbbing passion.

Once Hurstwood's inner passion is aroused, it will further undermine and spoil his psychic balance that he has kept for his family life. For example, when his wife asks him to visit some friends, the manager loses his toleration of which he used to be capable. Hurstwood broods inwardly: "I'll put a stop to this, I'm not going to be bothered fooling around with visitors when I have work to do" (p. 85). In fact, this is merely Hurstwood's egoistic rationalization, and he will not admit to himself that he has been greatly affected by Carrie. For him, Carrie is like "a new light" that shines "upon the horizon" (p. 85). Thus, Hurstwood is willing to "turn his face away entirely, and any call to look back" is "irksome" (p. 85). Just as he is jealous of Drouet, Hurstwood can be utterly indifferent to his wife. These psychic reactions resulting from the hope of winning Carrie

makes him lose his balance and become more restless and impatient in appearance.

In addition to his indifferent attitude toward his wife, Hurstwood begins to disregard social and moral restrictions as well, by continuing visiting Carrie. As an experienced saloon manager, Hurstwood can see through the young girl's heart and find that there are "the great surging feelings and desires which lie behind" (p.88). Being "slightly affected" (p.87) by the information that Drouet may be at home, Hurstwood finds an excuse for himself that he wants to visit "Mr. and Mrs. Drouet" (p. 87). However, his excuse only exemplifies his inner wish of seeing Carrie again. When they meet each other, Hurstwood makes bold to ask Carrie: "You are not happy. . . . You are not satisfied with life, are you?" By showing his "sympathy" for Carrie, (p,87) Hurstwood affects Carrie greatly. In a minute, the strong feelings of dissatisfaction seem to unite the two unhappy people. When Carrie is dissatisfied with her life, she is easily coaxed by Drouet to live with him. Now Hurstwood, too, violates moral restrictions by courting Carrie secretly. Indeed, dissatisfaction characterizes their personality, but it is dissatisfaction, too, that makes them commit the same error of disregarding social and moral restrictions in order to fulfill what they have dreamed of.

It is in this kind of mood, combined with his own sense of self-importance, that Hurstwood becomes more fanatic in his love affair with Carrie. Empty and dissatisfied, Hurstwood tells himself that "he must succeed with" Carrie (p. 91). Besides, his own wife has developed "a cold, commonplace nature which to him" is "anything but pleasing" (p.91). Only by degrading his own wife can Hurstwood feel the strong necessity of winning Carrie as worthy. Thus, Hurstwood egoistically convinces himself that Carrie's fate is "mingled with his" (p.91). When he is riding along the new Boulevard with Carrie, Hurstwood feels young

again, the energy of virility refilling his heart. Now he is a "romanticist after his kind" (p.95). While riding, he boldly expresses his wild flaming love to Cassie:

Carrie, I want you to love me. You don't know how much I need some one to waste a little affection on me. I am practically alone. There is nothing in my life that is pleasant or delightful. It's all work and worry with people who are nothing to me. . . . I could be content, if I had you to love me. If I had you to go to: you for a companion. As it is, I simply move about from place to place without any satisfaction. Time hangs heavily on my hands. Before you came I did nothing but idle and drift into anything that offered itself. Since you came--well, I've had you to think about. (pp. 95-96)

The outburst of Hurstwood's passion shows that he is too much fascinated by Carrie to think deeply that the girl, though young and ignorant, is more attracted by his fine clothes and position than by his flaming love. In other words, Hurstwood's romantic dream of love is based on passion, but Carrie's on materials. Thus, though the manager succeeds in coaxing Carrie, in fully understanding her unhappy life, he fails to imagine that if some day he loses what he has--good position and money, he will lose Carrie, too. As a stubborn lover who thinks highly of himself, Hurstwood has been so strongly driven by his id that he ignores what may happen to him, though he is consciously of violating social and moral restrictions. The riding which he take with Carrie does give him intense feelings of sexual satisfaction. Nevertheless, his passion discolors his sophistication and circumspectness of which he used to be proud.

II

Being in love with Carrie, Hurstwood tries to ignore the fact that his secret love affair with Carrie may probably cause him problem and hurt his

"home anchorage" (p. 66). For example, when Hurstwood feels "losing track of" what his wife and children are doing, (p. 106) and sees the indifference and independence growing even stronger in his wife, he first consoles himself that after all, he is not without affection. Things may go as they will at his house, but he has Carrie outside. (p.106) In addition, Hurstwood himself knows that his wife is "a cold, and self-centered woman," and he feels "some of this in her nature," though he does not actually perceive it. (p. 83) As we may understand, Mrs. Hurstwood will be revenged on her husband if she knows that she has been cheated and finds her husband's infidelity. For the time being, however, Hurstwood's passion has put aside this kind of danger.

The danger that has been ignored by Hurstwood keeps hanging on his subconscious. For example, one day when Carrie asks him to marry her, the suggestion of marriage strikes him forcibly, because it arouses in his heart the danger which has been ignored. In a moment, an idea flickers in his mind. Hurstwood asks Carrie suddenly: "Carrie, suppose I were to come to you next week, or this week for that matter--tonight say--and tell you I had to go away--that I couldn't stay another minute and wasn't coming back anymore--would you come with me?"(p.112) Obviously, to a psychoanalyst, what Hurstwood said is a Freudian slip. Though he rationalizes inwardly that he is only "joking" and enjoys the effect of it by feeling that it may "brush away" Carrie's "sweet seriousness" (p. 112), Hurstwood's self consolation and rationalization are just the projection of his inner worry about the danger which has been repressed and ignored.

Another example of Hurstwood's rationalization happens after he has won Carrie's promise to leave Drouet. Truly, since Hurstwood saw Carrie's excellent performance in the play, Under the Gaslight, he has been so much excited by Carrie's talent exhibited on the stage that he may sell "his soul

to be with her alone" (p. 141). We have mentioned that in his pursuit of Carrie, Hurstwood becomes a fanatic who is self-centered and possessive. Thus, it seems to him that the whole world is against him. He hates Drouet "as an intruder" (p. 136), but can not "dispose of Drouet effectually and forever" (p. 142). He dislike his wife, but can not get rid of his family bondage and social restrictions. However, since he has won Carrie's love now, he will be generous enough to tolerate his wife and Drouet, and to be on peaceful terms with them. Ignorant of his wife's discovery of his infidelity, Hurstwood, with Carrie's promise cherished in his heart, comes home delightedly. Dreiser describes:

... the manager came home in the suniest mood. His conversation and agreement with Carrie has raised his spirits until he was in the frame of mind of one who sings joyously. He was proud of himself, proud of his success, proud of Carrie. He could have been genial to all the world, and be pleasant, to forget her presence, to live in the atmosphere of youth and pleasure which had been restored to him. (p. 156)

The self-centered rationalization shows Hurstwood as a man who has not only lost his circumspectness but his ability of reasoning as well. He is the fanatic dreamer who has built up for himself a kingdom of mirage, and the conceited man who deems himself as capable of coping with whole society.

We may say that Hurstwood's romantic dream has been established on the assumption that nobody knows his love affair with Carrie, but once his secret is exposed, he will quickly be flung into a dilemma which may undermine his reputation and make him an outcast of his house and society. When Hurstwood comes home, rejoicing in his possession of Carrie, he generously suggests to his wife that she and the children may go to Waukesha if they want. However, Hurstwood's patronizing suggestion comes to be turned down by his wife. To his surprise, Mrs. Hurstwood answers him back defiantly:

"So you can stay here and trifle around with some one else?" (p. 158) Feeling slapped, Hurstwood tries to maintain his sense of authority in the house. Thus, when his wife asks for the money she needs for the trip, Hurstwood returns sharply: "As long as I'm in this house I'm master of it, and you or any one else won't dictate to me--do you hear?" (p. 159) In fact, Hurstwood is only strong and tough in appearance; he is utterly weak in heart. Mrs. Hurstwood not only makes her husband see clearly that she has got the financial control of the house, but she, by her action, tells him definitely that she has the law on her side. His wife is really the woman of power who may turn him out of the door of the house, and deprive him of the masterdom of the family. As Dreiser describes, Hurstwood is "like a vessel, powerful and dangerous, but rolling and floundering without sail" (p. 160). Challenged by his wife, Hurstwood can do nothing with her, because she is stronger than he before the law and public opinions.

Proud and self-centered, Hurstwood would not easily succumb to a hard situation. Instead of taking his wife's challenges as a warning, Hurstwood stubbornly believes that he will find a way out. When his wife asks the lawyer to send Hurstwood a letter demanding divorce and alimony, Hurstwood simply waits and postpones answering it. In appearance, Hurstwood remains quiet and calm as usual when working in the saloon. However, deep in his heart, he is restless, for he hopes to receive words from Carrie, and then he can take action and decide what to do with his predicament. Though he guesses that Carrie has already known his perfidy, Hurstwood still cherishes a hope for her. Thus, when Carrie does answer him, he deems her letter of blame and farewell as a kind of salvation. Hurstwood rationalizes: "Then, she loves me or she would not have written to me at all. She wouldn't write at all if she didn't care for me" (p. 187).

Indeed, Hurstwood is not the kind of man who may easily surrender; on

the contrary, the letter offers him temporal alleviation. Dreiser writes:

If he could only have Carrie, perhaps he could get out of the whole entanglement--perhaps it would not matter. He wouldn't care what his wife did with herself if only he might not lose Carrie. He stood up and walked about, dreaming his delightful dream of a life continued with this lovely possessor of his heart. (p.187)

Obviously, Hurstwood has been so much obsessed with Carrie that he even considers the possession of Carrie his only way of disentanglement. To put it more specifically, Hurstwood is as determined as his wife, because his heart is set on winning Carrie, just as his wife's on divorcing him.

Hurstwood's strong desire of winning Carrie and the urgency of his family issue both contribute to his theft in the saloon. Clearly we have seen that as Hurstwood's family issue becomes more urgent, he wants more intensely to be with Carrie who, in his eyes, can help him find a way of solution for his problem. Thus, one night, after Hurstwood has drunk some wine with his customers, he comes back to his office to check the whole things as usual. All of a sudden, he finds the safe in his office unlocked. The "unprotected" money catches his eyes immediately. (p. 190) As soon as Hurstwood thinks of speaking "to Mayhew about this to-morrow" (p. 190), his desire incites him to count the money. The sum of ten thousand dollars incites him greatly, but it arouses his mental conflict "between duty and desire" (p. 192), too. The manager takes the money in his hands, and then, tries to put it back. According to Dreiser's explanation, the "dullest specimen of humanity, when drawn by desire toward evil, is recalled by a sense of right, which is proportionate in power and strength to his evil tendency" (p. 192). But in my opinion, Hurstwood's case is more complicated. He feels threatened by his wife's challenge and attracted by Carrie's before-mentioned promise. Thus, his desire is now stronger than his sense of duty. Though he thinks of the

"terror of being fugitive from justice, "he then questions himself: "Why be afraid? " (p.193) Before he can put the money in the original box, the safe has been locked of itself.

Being shocked, Hurstwood repents and protests that the theft has been done by "a mistake" (p.194). He worries that if he lays the money on the top of the safe and runs away, "other things will happen" (p. 193), and his secret love affair with Carrie and quarrels with his wife may be exposed. It is this thought that leads Hurstwood to convince himself that there is no solution, no loophole left. In fact, wise and scrupulous as he is, Hurstwood never thinks that it is not impossible for him to explain the mistake to his bosses if he can stay and report to them the whole incident. And in Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin's opinion, Hurstwood "might have himself both unusually trustworthy and responsible by reporting the safe's closing to owner." However, Hurstwood is too much driven by his conception that he has to take the money and run away or he will be caught. Thus, in desperation, Hurstwood steals the money, and it is his passion for Carrie and the urgency of his family issue that lead him into such desperation.

In desperation, Hurstwood runs away from Chicago, but he does not lose his characteristic circumspection and sophistication in how to convince Carrie to run away with him. After he has taken the money, the first thought that strikes Hurstwood is that "I must get out of this" (p. 193). He not only calculates "how the trains run" (p. 194), but he makes plan to abduct Carrie. In a minute, Hurstwood drives to Ogden Place where Carrie dwells. He lies to her that Drouet has been hurt and wants to see her. On the train, when Carrie finds that Hurstwood has cheated her again, she protests, Hurstwood is fully "aroused to the immediate difficulty," and ceases to "think of his own situation." "He must do something with the girl," or she will "cause him trouble" (p. 198). In order to "explain and conciliate her"

(p. 197), Hurstwood picks up his old practice of persuasion:

You're angry at me because I deceived you, I didn't mean to, Carrie. As I live I didn't. I couldn't stay away from you after the first time I saw you I merely want to tell you, Carrie. You can't stop me from loving you, whatever you may think I'm through with my wife. She hasn't any claims on me. I'll never see her any more. That's why I'm here tonight. That's why I came and got you You're the only person I want. If I can have you I won't ever think of another woman again. (pp. 199-200)

Though Hurstwood tries eagerly to convince Carrie how much he loves her, we may see clearly that now his passion for her has been greatly undermined or discolored by his own predicament. Thus, what he said to Carrie is, in fact, more driven by his own circumspection out of his sense of insecurity than by his passion for Carrie.

Since Hurstwood's passion has been tainted with the color of practical necessity, he begins to see what he has to pay for his escape. As the train is rolling on its tracks, the ex-manager becomes more and more calm. In calmness, he feels a poignant sense of loss. Dreiser writes:

His condition was bitter in the extreme, for he did not want the miserable sum he has stolen. He did not want to be a thief. That sum or any other could never compensate for the state which he has thus foolishly doffed. It could not give him back his lost friends, his name, his house and family, nor Carrie, as he had meant to have her. He was shut out from Chicago--from his easy, comfortable state. He had robbed himself of his dignity, his merry meetings, his pleasant evenings. And for what? The more he thought of it the more unbearable it became. He began to think that he would try and restore himself to his old state. He would return the miserable thievings of the night and explain. Perhaps they would forgive him and let him come back. (p. 202)

However, what Hurstwood has lost can never be retrieved, because he has

gone too far in his misdeeds. He himself knows that even Carrie can not compensate for what he has lost. Hurstwood was once willing to be devoted to Carrie at any price, but now, his present situation and present state of mind form a sharp contrast with his psychic state before the theft. To put it more specifically, the reversal of his status happens almost simultaneously with the reversal of his state of mind.

On the one hand, Hurstwood is forced by the detective to send back the money; but on the other hand, he feels wronged and misunderstood by the law so that he wants, by sending back the money, to restore his dignity as a kind of compensation for the ignominy he has incurred. When Hurstwood plans to marry Carrie under a new name in Montreal, he feels he has been spied and followed in the lobby of the hotel. Though he decides to escape and "seek a more secluded hotel" (p. 207), the shadows of his deeds and flight keep weighing on him. Thus, when the detective comes up to speak to him, Hurstwood feels that his escape is futile and useless. The man tells him what Hurstwood is most afraid of. The man says:

well, now, there's no use of your talking that way, when you're in the hands of the police. We can make a lot of trouble for you if we want to. You're not registered in the right house, you haven't got your wife with you, and the newspapers don't know you're here yet. You might as well be reasonable. (p. 209)

Though Hurstwood protests inwardly that he has been "accused without being understood" (p.210), he decides to send back the ill-gotten money. Hurstwood tries to rationalize for himself in his letter to Fitzgerald and Moy. He considers what he has done to be a mistake only, and he regrets for it. We see that even when Hurstwood admits his mistake, he will not forget to justify himself. Only by sending back the money can he show his bosses that he does not mean to take the money from the very beginning. Hurstwood has been more influenced by his pride than by his conscience. As long as he

feels being wronged by "social injustice" (p. 210), he will try more eagerly to protect his pride with the touch of dignity.

Though Hurstwood remains proud when he feels wronged and frustrated by social injustice, the frustration to him is, in fact, not only traumatic, but it causes him to taste, for the first time, the bitterness of social indifference. For example, before he is sure of what may happen to him when he gets off the train with Carrie, Hurstwood is "screwed up to the highest tension," and glances "furtively to and fro" as he makes for the street entrance. (p. 213) Now the feelings of being a social outcast overwhelm him. Dreiser writes:

All this he realised, now quite sharply, as he faced the city, cut off from his friends, despoiled of his modest fortune, and even his name, and forced to begin the battle for place and comfort all over again. He was not old, but he was not so dull but that he could feel he soon would be. Of a sudden, then, this show of fine clothes, place, and power took on peculiar significance. It was emphasised by contrast with his own distressing state. (p. 215)

Furthermore, Hurstwood has been deprived of the right of being a complete stranger in New York, for his old-time friends may recognize him when they meet him. One day, when Hurstwood is walking in Broadway, one of his old friends greets him before he can avoid seeing the man. His friend promises to visit Hurstwood but never asks for his address. In his life, Hurstwood has never been slighted or neglected in this way. He is not only afraid of seeing his friends, but he is unwilling to see them unless things will "change for the better in a money way" (p. 220). Indeed, money has made him fall from his managerial position, suffer from social indifference, but now it is money, too, that can offer him the chance of retrieving his lost glory, that can heal his wounded pride in his heart.

I I I

Thinking of restoring his social status, Hurstwood invests all his money in saloon business on Warren Street, but his investment can only help him lead an ordinary life which makes him more reminiscent of his luxurious and comfortable life in Chicago. Hurstwood's experience tells him that he must "act quickly" (p.215), to invest his money in the business which he is most familiar. In comparison, the saloon on Warren Street is much smaller and less grandiose in scale than Fitzgerald and Moy's. In addition, his partner does not own the land of the saloon, and Hurstwood himself may be as rootless as the saloon itself. Thus, what he can expect from his investment is quite limited. The saloon may be forced to close its door when the land is sold by its owner. But Hurstwood's existing situation allows him no second choice. He has to face the fact, though he is dissatisfied with his income. He thinks of his past whenever he feels sorry for his present situation. Dreiser writes:

As for Hurstwood, he was making a great fight against the difficulties of a changed condition. He was too shrewd to realise the tremendous mistake he had made, and appreciate that he had done well in getting where he was, and yet he could not help contrasting his present state with his former, hour after hour, and day after day. (p. 219)

Reminiscence of the past serves to confirm Hurstwood's belief in himself when he feels that now he is in a sorry state, but it also adds to him the feelings of helplessness, and makes him feel more poignant the irrevocability of his old situation.

Hurstwood's passion for Carrie wanes as his career wanes. We have mentioned that Hurstwood had long recognized the fact that his possession of Carrie could hardly compensate for his loss which is caused by the mistake of theft. Since he can not find compensation or any solace in

Carrie, Hurstwood tries to compensate by rebuilding his social status. Thus, though he knows that it will "take a long time to make friends" (p. 217), Hurstwood tries hard to pick up some new friends who may do good to his saloon business. Hurstwood begins to put aside his love for Carrie. He tries to rationalize for his negligence that his home life is "very precious to him," but in order to establish his social position, he may allow himself to "occasionally stay away from dinner" (p. 221). This, in fact, is only Hurstwood's excuse used for his self-rationalization. Deep in his heart, Hurstwood never thinks of entertaining Carrie. Even when his income increases a little, Hurstwood is only more attracted by the outer world than by Carrie.

Dreiser describes:

Thoughts of entertaining her, leading her out into the shine and show of life, grew less and less. He felt attracted to the outer world, but did not think she would care to go along. Once he went to the theater alone. (p. 222)

Obviously, as Hurstwood becomes more involved in the fight of life making, his passion for Carrie disappear as well. Before he fell, Hurstwood could sell his soul to be with Carrie. But now, things change and his heart changes, too.

Hurstwood's battle of life comes to be a great failure when he fails to abandon his strong feelings of pride, and to accustom himself to the changing situation. When the saloon on Warren Street is forced to be closed, Hurstwood jokes with Carrie by saying: "Well, to-day's my last day on earth" (p. 250). Proud and wayward, Hurstwood tries to laugh away his discouraging failure. He consoles himself that things will be all right tomorrow. (p. 249) Hurstwood has once thought of applying for the bartender's job, but he will not allow himself to do so owing to his pride. He broods: "Bartender--he, the ex-manager!" (p.252) However, when he tries to find work, he is rejected by the firm's manager because of his age and his proud

bearing. Dreiser describes the manager's reaction to Hurstwood's attitude:

The man did not take kindly at all to his "No position to choose." He wanted some one who wasn't thinking of a choice or something better. Especially not an old man. He wanted some one young, active, and glad to work actively for a moderate sum. Hurstwood did not please him at all. He has more of an air than his employers. (p. 254)

Hurstwood has been misled by his pride and fails to see that he is not the man who chooses, but the man who can only wait to be chosen. Being frustrated again and again, Hurstwood keeps escaping to his comfortable rocking chair and consoles himself: "I can do something. I'm not down yet. There's a lot of things coming to me if I want to go after them" (p. 263). Indeed, there is a lot of work that Hurstwood may apply for if only he can deliver himself from his bondage of pride. In other words, Hurstwood is more inhibited by himself than by the difficult situation he is in.

Hurstwood's pride has kept him from getting any new job, and it also brings about his degeneration into a state of inertia which keeps corrupting his spirit. As Hurstwood feels it more difficult to find a job, he allows himself to be more addicted to sitting in his rocking chair which seems to relieve him from pain by its comfort. But when his financial strait becomes more urgent, Carrie loses her patience and questions Hurstwood why he does not go out and look for work. Feeling stunned and insulted, Hurstwood tries to maintain his wounded pride. He answers her back: "I pay the rent, don't I?" (p. 266) When Carrie continues to challenge him with the responsibility of a husband, Hurstwood, in desperation, reveals to Carrie the fact of their false marriage. With this revelation, Hurstwood intends to escape from Carrie's acerbic accusation, but he can not escape from his own "mental accusation" (p. 267), which tells him that she is right. Too much bound by his pride, and too much influenced

by his long inertia, Hurstwood turns out to be a man of thoughts, instead of a man of action. Facing Carrie's accusation, Hurstwood is too weak in heart to defend himself. He can only protest inwardly: "I'm not so bad. I'm not down yet" (p. 267). Feeling no one to turn to, Hurstwood tries to heal his pride and win back his feelings of self-importance by gambling, but he fails. Hurstwood not only gambles away his precious money, but he gambles away his aspiration for life, his sense of responsibility, and his courage to face the harshness of reality as well.

As Hurstwood's life becomes more difficult, he thinks of depending on Carrie. Frightened by the shortness of Hurstwood's money, Carrie, one day, suggests to find a job for himself. Deep in his heart, Hurstwood fears that Carrie will "get on the stage in some cheap way and forsake him" (p.271). To hide his fear, he suggests her not to try at all. However, the hardness of his situation now is stronger than his fear. He is a man out of job, a man who is not supposed to depend on his woman. Hurstwood then rationalizes for himself: "Why could not Carrie assist him a little until he could get something?" (p. 272). In his good days, this idea would be an insult to his manhood. But now, it is only a kind of expediency for him to let Carrie work out and bring back some money to him.

Nevertheless, the more Hurstwood depends on her, the less he will depend on himself. Knowing his own dependence on Carrie, Hurstwood continues to speak to Carrie, but above all, to console himself, that "I'll lay my hand to whatever I can get, I can get something" (p. 273). Indeed, Hurstwood has always tried to look for work, or, at least, thinks of looking for work. He even bends his pride to be willing to "take a position as bartender" (p.278), if only he can get it. However, his situation becomes worse as his tendency changes. Before he can find the job, he speaks to himself: "No use, I might as well go on back home" (p. 278). Despondent and diffident, Hurst-

wood can only wait in home and receive money from Carrie with "some little shame in him" (p. 283). Stubbornly, Hurstwood denies the changes occurring in himself. His egoistic belief in himself comes to be the best tool for him to rationalize his dependence on Carrie. He justifies himself with the thought that he really will "get something" (p. 284). Ironically, Hurstwood fulfills what he said to Carrie before--he really can not live without her now. As Hurstwood depends on Carrie so much, he leaves nothing for himself to depend on except his self-rationalization.

Though Hurstwood has been mentally occupied with his self-rationalization of depending on Carrie, he remains conscious of her growing indifference and sullen protest, and for these, his pride revives. One day when Hurstwood finds in the newspapers that there is a serious strike continuing on the trolley lines in Brooklyn, he decides to try his lot again. To Hurstwood, he does not "sympathise with the corporations" (p. 297), and in fact, he consciously knows that he is on the strikers' side. But again, his difficult situation and his awakening pride will not allow him to follow his conscience's choice, or, in other words, to give up this opportunity of rehabilitation. Thus, when Carrie tries to stop him from going there, Hurstwood becomes more stubborn in his decision. Dreiser writes:

The one thought that strengthened him was the insult offered by Carrie. He was not down so low as to take all that, he thought. He could do something--this, even--for a while. It would get better. He would save a little.
(p. 310)

Obviously, Hurstwood wants to prove that he is still capable of doing work. And by doing work, he can heal his pride wounded by Carrie.

Nevertheless, Hurstwood's state of mind blinds him from the possible danger he may risk. While he is driving the trolley, Hurstwood is beaten and hurt seriously by the strikers. In fact, they not only hurt him physically,

but mentally as well. Dispitefully, Hurstwood walks homeward in a blinding snowstorm. And it is the storm in his heart, the storm resulting from his bitter frustration, that overwhelms him. In frustration, Hurstwood comes to recognize the harsh fact that "he had tried and failed" (p. 313). However, Hurstwood's pride is so strong that it keeps fostering him even when he has been seriously frustrated. When he later finds Carrie gone, he weakly protests: "She needn't have gone away, I'd have got something. I tried, didn't I?" (p. 321) Hurstwood's weak protest and lingering pride in frustration further exemplify the helplessness he feels.

Feeling frustrated and helpless, Hurstwood finds the fulfillment of his wish in his fantasy of the past. Every single fantasy, in Freudian language, "is the fulfillment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality."⁸ We have read Hurstwood's protest against social injustice which, in his egoistic thinking, causes his downfall. And we have seen him forsaken by Carrie when his life comes to the hardest crisis. Thus, when Hurstwood is reading newspapers about Carrie's success on stage, her achievement not only presents "a marked contrast" to Hurstwood's depravity, (p. 336) but it makes him fall into the fantasy of his past glory. In fantasy, Hurstwood dreams of himself well-dressed and discussing with Sagar Morrison about some investment in South Chicago. Dreiser describes this kind of fantasy's effects on Hurstwood:

Here his preference was to close his eyes and dream of other days, a habit which grew upon him. It was not sleep at first, but a mental hearkening back to scenes and incidents in his Chicago life. As the present became darker, the past grew brighter, and all that concerned it stood in relief. (p. 336)

Thus, Hurstwood's fantasy may temporarily relieve him from his present adversity, and help him forget his sufferings from the harshness of reality.

In addition to fantasy, there exists in Hurstwood's subconscious another

tendency--that of dependence on Carrie. While reading the newspaper about Carrie's success, Hurstwood shows his pride by speaking to himself: "Well, let her have it, I won't bother her" (p. 328). It is Hurstwood's tendency, too, that he never worries about his own living problem unless he falls into a desperate situation. Consciously, Hurstwood knows that he still has some dollars to last his life. But subconsciously, he is still dependent on Carrie. Thus, one day when he finds that Carrie is out of the city, Hurstwood turns shocked and frightened by this fact. Dreiser writes :

Carrie had gone ! He remembered seeing a poster of her only yesterday, but no doubt it was one left uncovered by the new signs. Curiously, this fact shocked him up. He had almost to admit that somehow he was depending upon her being in the city. Now she was gone. He wondered how the important fact had skipped him. Goodness knows when she would be back now. Impelled by a nervous fear, he rose and went into the dingy hall, where he counted his remaining money, unseen. There were but ten dollars in all. (p. 337)

Hurstwood's pride remains strong in destitution. Forced by his worsening destitution, Hurstwood summons up all his courage and tries to find a job in the Broadway Central hotel. Though he is accepted to do the scrub work in the hotel, his health, influenced by his pneumonia, will not allow him to continue his work. As Hurstwood begins begging on the streets, he wonders how he should "get at Carrie now" (p. 345). When he finds Carrie and takes money from her, Hurstwood still tries to preserve his last lingering pride. He says: "All right, I will give it back to you some day" (p.352). Indeed, all through his misery, Hurstwood's pride keeps supporting him. He may rationalize for himself his asking for Carrie's money, begging for a few cents from the pedestrians on the streets, but he never loses his pride. His pride may be wounded and frustrated, but it will exist as long as Hurstwood lives.

Hurstwood is full of contradictions as to the thought of death. Hurstwood sometimes thinks of ending "his troubles" (p.361). But whenever he successfully gets money from others, he will rationalize that life is worth living after all. As his difficulty increases, and as he feels further humiliated by others, Hurstwood's death wish again turns out to be more determined. For example, one day when he tries to beg for some cents from a pedestrian, the man says to him scornfully: "You are no good. I'll give you nawthin" (p. 361). Feeling humiliated, Hurstwood, with tears in his eyes, says to the man: "That's right. I had money. I'm going to quit this" (p. 361). Dejected as he is, Hurstwood resorts to Carrie as his last hope. He has been so much frustrated by social indifference, so much humiliated by others, that he speaks to himself incoherently: "She's got it. Let her give me some" (p.362). Clearly, we may see that now Hurstwood is in the severest dilemma of his life, and he needs Carrie's relief desperately.

However, the outcome of Hurstwood's final attempt only makes him completely disillusioned. When he has been scorned and pushed down by Carrie's attendants, Hurstwood shouts to these men proudly: "I--I hired such people as you once" (p. 363). In shouting, Hurstwood seems to defy all the humiliation that has been heaped upon him. And most important of all, by shouting proudly, Hurstwood seems to realize that it is time for him to end his life. Feeling disillusioned, Hurstwood, in the asylum house, turns on the gas light without flame. Before he dies, Hurstwood speaks to himself weakly: "What's the use?" (p.337) Hurstwood is disillusioned because life means nothing to him now. Or, if it means anything, it means only humiliation, which his pride can hardly long endure.

IV

From our analysis we can see that Hurstwood's egoistic pride ruins him.

If he were not characterized by his "own sense of importance" (p. 33) and did not think so highly of himself, he would not want so much to steal Carrie from his friend. And owing to his pride, Hurstwood sticks to his belief that he can win Carrie, and he can survive well in New York. However, when he is frustrated again and again in his attempt of rehabilitation in New York, Hurstwood tastes and learns the bitterness and harshness of reality. Speaking of Hurstwood's downfall, Charles C. Walcutt says that "Hurstwood has qualities which cause him to lose some of the reader's sympathy."⁹ But in my opinion, owing to his pride, Hurstwood's downfall further arouses our sympathy for him, because we may be flawed as Hurstwood is, and we may be down-trodden or feel frustrated in our real lives in some other ways as Hurstwood is in his way. In addition to the feelings of catharsis he evokes in us, Hurstwood further shows his dignity as a man by choosing to die instead of living in humiliation. Indeed, it is pride that causes Hurstwood's downfall. However, it is pride, too, that helps him retain his dignity at the end of his tragic life.

Notes

¹ Donald Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 80.

² "With the Novelists" in Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser, ed. Donald Pizer (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), p. 160.

³ William Marion Reedy, "Sister Carrie," in Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser, p. 158.

⁴ Harris Merton Lyon, "Theodore Dreiser's Sither Carrie," in Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser, pp. 162-63.

⁵ Donald Pizer, The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study, p. 72.

⁶ Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (New York: Norton, 1970), p. 33. Subsequent references to this edition appear in the text within parentheses.

⁷ Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, "Hurstwood Achieved: A Study of Dreiser's Reluctant Art," in The Dreiser Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Fall, 1978), p. 13.

⁸ Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," in Critical Theory Since Plato, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 750.

⁹ Charles C. Walcutt, "Theodore Dreiser: The Wonder and Terror of Life," in Critical Essays on Theodore Dreiser, p. 67.

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