This thesis attempts a reappraisal of Theodore Dreiser who has been a controversial figure. The publication of his anti-victorian novel *Sister Carrie* stirred up a hornet's nest. The novel provoked a great deal of hostility from the genteel society because of its supposedly prurient effect upon 'the young and impressionable mind.'

Dreiser whose works were written in a mood of acquiescence to natural law was branded as a reveller in sex. He had to face vitriolic attacks from members of the genteel society for debunking hypocrisy and flagrantly violating the norms of the conventional victorian society. The real worth of Dreiser was realized in the late twenties. His *Sister Carrie*, the anti-victorian book of 1900, has now become a classic.

This thesis examines the role of the forces of heredity and social environment in determining the texture of the lives of Dreiser's characters, their attitude towards life and their approach towards the problems of love and sex. It also shows that the forces of heredity and social environmen
are instrumental in causing alienation and loneliness even when
Dreiser’s men and women live in a society. Dreiser was emotion-
ally involved with his characters as he himself was the victim
of the forces of heredity and social environment.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to the Librarians,
American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad; the Librarian, Ameri-
can Centre Library, New Delhi; the Librarian, Indian Institute of
Technology, Kanpur and the Librarian, DAV College, Kanpur for
their generous help in loaning books to me.

So far as the writing of the thesis itself is con-
cerned, the very greatest thanks are due to Dr. MM Sakeena,
Head of the department of English, DAV College, Kanpur, without
whose encouragement and help this work might not have been
undertaken.

I also wish to thank my colleague Dr. SK Trivedi for
sparing his precious time in going through the manuscript of
the thesis and making valuable suggestions.

Above all, I am indebted to my Supervisor, Dr. Brij
Mohan Sakeena for his consistent help and guidance. He has
been in a true sense my 'teacher, guide and philosopher.'
In the end, I must express my warm thanks and gratitude to my wife, Smt. NM Nigam who has assisted me all along in more ways than can be acknowledged here.

Also, grateful thanks are due to Mr. Sudhir Shukla for his aesthetically pleasing and correct typing of the script.

Kanpur:_________ 

- Govind Shanker Nigam