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**Article history:**

**Submitted:** 27 February 2024

**Revised:** 18 March 2024

**Accepted:** 09 April 2024

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**Keywords:**

*desire;*

*masculinity;*

*power;*

*sex;*

*weakness;*

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**Abstract**

Age, gender, and race (among many), are often used as sources of power in human societies to lord it over the weaker ones. Two decades before women got the right to vote in the U.S., Theodore Dreiser published *Sister Carrie*, portraying an 18-year-old girl dissatisfied with county life, who travels to the city for better life. The journey and the stay met with masculinity showcased by a sex-hungry Drouet and a fragmented Hurstwood. Lack of responsibility as a male quickly plunges this figure into a journey that gradually weakens him deprives him of belongings, and finally offers him suicide. Informed by psychoanalytical theory, this paper describes *Sister Carrie* in terms of weakness of power (male over female) which turns the powerful into weak and the weak into powerful.

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## 1 Introduction

Theodore Dreiser's writings brought a paradigm shift in American literature from the modernist to postmodernist ideology. This accomplished writer made plain what was taboo and enabled common Americans to come to the shore. Many critics have acclaimed Dreiser, particularly for giving us *Sister Carrie*. For example, the *Toledo Blade* reported that the book "is a faithful portraiture of the conditions it represents, showing how the tangle of human life is knotted thread by thread" (Katope, 1969). Oftentimes, people tend to blame the individual woes on society and fate. True indeed, Dreiser's society praises evil more than good and lures us into the idealized world. We never cease to desire, to compare ourselves to others and to compete.

Although much scholarship has extensively discussed important aspects of Dreiser's fiction, I believe that they have not fully held men accountable for their handling of sexuality toward women. Interestingly, in *Sister Carrie*, two irresponsible men fail to differentiate between reason and penchant. *Sister Carrie* begins with Carrie Meber's journey. She leaves her mother in Columbia to her sister in Chicago (Dreiser, 1961). On her way, Carrie meets Drouet who courts her and wins her heart. Upon arrival, Carrie dislikes her sister's flat since sweet deceit comes calling and she runs to Drouet who lodges her in a better flat. A few days later, Drouet meets his friend Hurstwood and informs him that he has a new journey with a new lady (Salzman, 1969). Once Hurstwood meets Carrie, his friend's girlfriend, he falls for her. Hurriedly, Hurstwood steals his company's money, flees his wife and children and makes his way together with Carrie to New York. As the saying goes, "Marriage in haste, regret at leisure," Hurstwood's dream life with Carrie in New York begins to falter and collapse. He strives to patch it and live in the mirage. Meanwhile, realities heat the door and he sinks into indescribable poverty. In the meantime, Carrie meets her fate and becomes popular with her artistic talents. As the book gets to an end, Hurstwood commits suicide and vanquishes.

This analytical paper purports to delve into human nature and masculine mystique, in particular. This mystique, in this context, is more or less hedonistic. There are things we do that do not go viral and we often think they go unseen. But in truth, they are not. In this perspective, a question arises: as people (men and women) generally think masculinity is vested with power, how come men easily become so weak (need) to self-destruction in front of the opposite sex? This paper addresses this question with no pretension to find *the* solution but, while analyzing two male characters involved in one girl's life, the paper wants to raise awareness on how the powerful can easily become weak and lose any dignity. By heavily relying on psychoanalytical criticism, this paper is structured around two parts: the first hones in on Drouet's representation of imbecility, and the second showcases that of Hurstwood, the personification of the energumen (Caselli & Spada, 2015; Wellman & Woolley, 1990).

## 2 Drouet: A Representation of the Stupid Male Character

Drouet is the first male character who succumbs to the charm of the little girl from rural Illinois. He does not think of losing his senses upon meeting Carrie. Still, Drouet, as we shall discover, is a womanizer *par excellence*. He never fails in any womanizing mission and does get prey whenever he goes out hunting. His portraiture, being a gift, enables him to carry out most missions:

(...) strong physical nature, actuated by a keen desire for the feminine, was the next...His method was always simple. Its principal element was daring, backed of course, by an intense desire and admiration for the sex. Let him meet with a young woman twice and he would straighten her necktie for her and perhaps address her by her first name. If he caught the attention of some young woman while waiting...he would find out her name, her favorite flower, where a note would reach her, and perhaps pursue the delicate task of friendship. (p. 10)

It is true, they say that consequences or experiences are good educators. However, this is hard to believe especially when some people, after experiencing hardships, hardly learn from them. What they later do is worse than that of the past. Drouet, this young fellow we were introduced to at the outset of the plot, does not give heed to anything. He does not want to learn from his past errors, and neither does he seem to learn from his friend Hurstwood's tragic end.

According to the narrative, Drouet was the first gentleman who fell for Carrie. But as events unfold, he lost sight of her. If some people were at his place, they would not be falling victim, should such a situation occur. But as for him, whether he has been deceived by a woman, or cheated by his male friend who took his woman, that does not mean anything. Life should be lived as one sees it. Driven by his sexual penchants and imbecility, Drouet continues his womanizing predatory endeavours. For example, when he meets his old friend Harry in New York, Fortieth

Street, he quickly proposes they should go out and fetch some girls: “Hello Harry, I can introduce you to something dead swell... Oh a couple of girls over here in Fortieth Street. We could have a dandy time” (p. 458).

It would have been advantageous for Drouet to know that life is not always what it appears to offer. There are ups and downs and oftentimes, we dig our tomb out of “I don’t care-ism” and immorality. True indeed the narrator remarks: “Oh, the tangle of human life! How dimly as yet we see. Here was Carrie, in the beginning poor, unsophisticated, emotional; responding with desire to everything most lovely in life... Laws to say: ‘Be allured, if you will, by everything lovely, but draw not nigh unless by righteousness.’ Convention to say: you shall not better your situation save by honest labor” (Reichardt, 2017). This passage reflects Carrie’s life, and I surmise that it equally does with the two gentlemen.

One big weakness of Drouet is that he is often unable to resist female charm. When he sees his fellow man suffering beside him, he barely gives a helping hand. One can further argue that his relatives can be dying, yet Drouet will not show a sign of attention. The narrator informs us that femininity seduces and permeates his feelings. He could give a woman all his savings. Though sacrifice is a necessary ingredient that sweetens marriage, the sacrifice which is at stake here seems useless. His intention is not always towards marriage. For instance, he is simply, to borrow the youth’s parlance, hanging out with Carrie or, should I add, flirting with her. In this instance, Sister Carrie is flabbergasted by his joviality and kindness. The narrator confirms: “She conceived a true estimate of Drouet. To her, and indeed to all the world, he was a nice, good-hearted man. There was nothing evil in the fellow. He gave her the money out of a good heart—out of a realization of her want. He would not have given the same amount to a poor young man, but we must not forget that a poor young man could not, like things, have appealed to him like a poor young girl. Femininity affected his feelings. He was a creature of an inborn desire” (p. 64).

Generally, a womanizer does not succeed in life. In this way, he sabotages his power or energy for success for women’s sake. Drouet, the story reads: “loved to make advances to women, to have them succumb to his charms, not because he was a cold-blooded, dark, scheming villain, but because his inborn desire urged him to that as a chief delight. He was vain, he was boastful, he was as deluded by fine clothes as any silly-headed girl” (p. 64). Drouet represents men who deliberately ruin some women’s careers. In *Sister Carrie*, Carrie Meeber was going to her sister in Chicago for a purpose. Either was she to learn a trade, continue her studies, or search for a promising job. Like many other ladies today who leave their parents in rural communities for urban areas and are lured by men. The result turns often to be disastrous. In some cases, poor ladies are sometimes impregnated by foolish and weak men who shut these women’s dreams down. In other cases, ladies are seduced by pimps who use them to meet their own goals. Drouet can therefore be considered as one of these pimps because he seduces Carrie and lets his friend take advantage of the poor lady (Berke et al., 2018; Gannon et al., 2004).

Another great weakness of Drouet is his obsession with the female body. A mere glance at a woman entails falling for her. This attitude of his, in a real sense, cannot lead that far. A man who cannot see a woman pass without saying a word is doomed to be objectified. As the story begins, the reader senses that our gentleman truly has a thing for the feminine gender. The first time Drouet comes across Carrie, he turns to a puppet that controls nothing at all. He talks to the extent that one wonders whether he gets a certificate in talking. In a simple conversation with Carrie, he begins asking her if she wants “to see Lincoln Park... Michigan Boulevard... theatres, crowds, fine houses” (p. 11) as if Carrie needs him before discovering those places.

The more a man is sexually driven to a woman, the more he becomes a fool. One does not pretend that desiring the female body is a crime. However, what one is denouncing in this context is that craving and tending to sacrifice all that one has for occasional love is unacceptable. To this end, we find our poor Drouet who is “lured as much by his longing for pleasure as by his desire to shine among” women (p. 49). Drouet’s condition is replete in our current world. Many are these men who pretend to be going abroad for a mission. They sometimes lie to their naive spouses that they are travelling on behalf of their companies or for business’ sake. Yet, they would give those reasons to avoid being caught red-handed. I am not saying that people should not go on missions, far from that. This is part of some responsibilities assigned in some institutions. All one is condemning is what happens oftentimes in the course of missions. Either, people sleep with unknown women in hotels or they go for a date. Drouet, as Dreiser has the narrator say, was on an important mission for the “Bartlett, Caryoe & Company” from Columbia going back to Chicago (Jones, 2008). He could have spared time, energy and money had he kept his distance from Carrie. As previously stated, Drouet is a seducer *par excellence*. A man ought not to give to lusts as he does. His first glance at Carrie makes him lose control. He begins talking to her as if they have known each other for decades. Drouet emasculates and denigrates himself before Carrie. A Man of his rank and age has to distinguish between real love

and puppy love. He is obsessed and is out of control whenever he faces women. He behaves like a child who cannot recognize right from left.

Both Drouet and Carrie board a car for Chicago, the book reads. Upon arrival, each one should take his/her way. Because our Drouet encounters a lady—someone not even worthy of attraction at first glance—Drouet is half agonized and starts pleading and seeking the lady's attention. As the story unfolds, the reader is shocked to see such a big man, Drouet, to be willing to carry Carrie's luggage: "I suppose your people will be here to meet you?" he said." Let me carry your grip"" (p. 14).

Honestly, there is nothing wrong with trying to help your fellow. After all, this is part of the human value: assist your neighbour whenever the opportunity arises. However, the assistance, the type of Drouet is not recommended. He somersaults once he sees Carrie and forgets that he is on a business trip and should have been focused.

When a person gives in for excess pleasure, that person ends so badly. In Dreiser, we are told that our fellow Drouet loves pleasure. Still, if the story ends there, that will be fine. What is surprising is that this man longs for pleasure: "Drouet, for one, was lured as much by his longing for pleasure, as by his desire to shine" (p. 49). Indeed, when someone longs for something, they either get it at all costs or they believe they get it for fear of being cautioned (del Mar Sánchez-Fuentes et al., 2014; Abitbol et al., 1999; Smith, 1971).

Interestingly, the ensuing discussion between Drouet and Hurstwood reveals that modern American men had a serious problem. Most of them could not have a stable moral life and were fond of women. After all, when a man has money and is not so religious or intellectual, what else could we expect from him? We can see that Dreiser's male characters are weak when it comes to their interaction with female individuals. They like discussing it all day long as if they have no other subject. As the story unfolds, Drouet informs his fellow that he has just won a lady and see how metaphorical he puts it: "I struck a little peach coming in on the train Friday...By George, that's so, I must go and call on her before I go away...She was a little dandy" (p. 50). Understandably, Carrie is that little peach being struck by Drouet. Had he known what was awaiting him, he would not have dared to say so. Since the narrator is equally interested in the very peach issue, read his comment: "Thus was Carrie's name bandied about in the most frivolous and gay of place" (p. 50).

While analyzing the book, the reader discovers that Drouet has been all agog. His weak attitude towards women leads him into an illusion. This suggests that Dreiser seems to say that his male character has a "rapacious appetite for...women" (Boynton, 1923).

### 3 Hurstwood: The Very Imbecile *Par Excellence*

We stated earlier that Hurstwood is the one who steals money and runs away with his friend Drouet's girlfriend. Let us hone into his life and find out. Hurstwood, as the narrator tells us, is a respectful person in the town: "He had been pointed out as a very successful and well-known man about town...Besides being slightly under forty, he had a good, stout constitution, an active manner, and a solid, substantial air" (p. 45). A scrutiny of this passage suggests that this man is making it in life and could become a billionaire if only he could keep up on that track.

Hurstwood, besides his fortune, has a stable social life. He is married and has two children. By getting married, this character seems to claim faithfulness and responsibility. He, one can argue, is cautioning his fellow men that in life, as one grows, the best thing a man ought to do is to get married. This stabilizes a man and, in our current world, sends away any flying and devious maiden whose intent is to get a *quid pro quo* situation and vanish. Marriage, so they say, keeps one at bay from boredom, fornication, and moral decay if one sticks to the very creed that establishes marital vows. Coming over to his family, he "had his wife and two children, who were well established in a neat house on the North Side near Lincoln Park, and was altogether a very acceptable individual of our great American upper class—the first grade below the luxuriously rich" (pp. 46-7). Indeed, Hurstwood began his career very well. He earns his wages out of hard work and industriousness. Good enough, according to the narrator: "He (Hurstwood) had risen by perseverance and industry, through long years of service, from the position of barkeeper in a common salon to the present altitude" (p. 46). To this end, he should have continued and serve as a role model to others.

In life, it is important to remain faithful to one's spouse. Those who always flirt with mistresses pay a heavy price. Moreover, we need not do all sorts of jobs because one is looking for money. Hurstwood, we are told, has the mastery of flirting and can recommend women to men. His "material well-being depends upon his mastery of the arts of flirtation. His job in Chicago is to greet the customers of his bar in a manner that allows them to imagine that they have finally found someone who understands them, no matter what social rank they may occupy" (Harmon, 2000). As such, he cannot but end tragically.

Sadly, Hurstwood refuses to remain loyal to his principles. He wants to taste other things as if there are greener pastures elsewhere. He now wants his friend's wife-to-be at all costs. What follows next is so disgusting. Life seems sweet in New York but shortly, money goes away, Carrie also opens her eyes discovers newness and abandons Dreiser's renegade.

As the foregoing suggests, Hurstwood paints himself into a corner. He who had plenty of money and ran away with a woman, is now hardly paying off his hotel room. As the story encapsulates, the reader realizes that Hurstwood who began paying fifty dollars a day in a hotel, is unable to continue paying and barely finds fifteen cents to pay for a room. All these plights befall him because he refuses to listen to his reasons and follows instead his penchant.

Hurstwood's case is so glaring in our modern-day world that no one needs further critique to believe it. In the name of so-called love, responsible men often abandon their families and their hard-earned jobs to run after women and eventually succumb before realities. Some men can even divorce their wives pretending they are not satisfied as though there is a greener pasture elsewhere (Zhang et al., 2012; van der Krogt et al., 2012).

To worsen their case, certain men lose complete sense, behave like toddlers, and sell off their properties to meet the needs of their mistresses. Surprisingly, when these men are deceived by the slay queens, they tend to return to their former wives. Let us examine once again our unfortunate Hurstwood. When his life becomes bitter, the reader discovers that this man, like thousands of others, suffers horrible things no one would ever imagine. He who could offer people jobs and rooms without feeling it is now seeking anything as a job to survive. Food is hard to get and what else could he do? In a conversation with a bartender or so, it is revealed that if Hurstwood does not get something done, he will starve to death. He tells the men he is discussing with: "My friend.... Is there anything about this hotel that I could get to do? ...I am out of work and out of money and I've got to get something –it doesn't matter what." Much further, he says: "could you give me something to do for a few days? I am in a position where I have to get something at once" (p. 426). Now he seems to be open and is coming to the full knowledge of his trouble. This is the question one may put back to him: did you not weigh the consequence of what you were doing then when running away from your family and job?

A man should respect himself and cling to his principles no matter what. A man has to live by rules and follow moral conduct. But if he fails, nothing else could bring him to his right mind. All he can do is give himself to all kinds of misdemeanours, deviations, and moral decays. Hurstwood was once a respected man. He was once a manager. Now that he is carnal-minded, he becomes a beggar and wanderer. Hurstwood's begging attitude needs careful analysis to caution other like-minded people about the danger of giving in to sexual desires. Interestingly, the reader finds out that our friend has turned into a different person altogether. A whole manager that he was, now before he could eat, he needs to be given. "I'm broke now, and if you believe me, I haven't eaten anything today" (p. 427).

As one might have noticed, Dreiser's character is now suffering because he runs after the charm and beauty of a mere lady. I call Carrie a mere lady because she was once from a rural area in Columbia, "an innocent farm girl," Katope describes her (Katope, 1969). He does not remind himself that beauty is deceitful and charm is vain and those who feed on these two concepts always bail out direly. Beauty, they said, is only skin deep. According to Tommy Nelson, "If we respond to a person only based on outer beauty, we get a relationship that is as deep as that form of beauty—which is pretty shallow" (1998, p. 5).

Whenever a man wastes time on women, he loses his self-esteem and acts powerlessly and foolishly. Although Hurstwood wants to work and is looking for one, he fails to perform his duty because of a lack of energy. This energy should have been there had he not given it all to women. We are told on an occasion that he was so pale that he could not lift one of the boxes where he was working. When he was asked what the matter was, he pretended to be sick. Moreover, the Chicago Hurstwood has no resemblance with that of Six Avenue. On this Avenue, he becomes "wholly disconsolate in spirit, hungry to what he deemed an almost mortal extent, weary and defeated" (p. 435). And if his life flip-flops and is now senseless, it is his fault. In a very sarcastic and mocking tone, the narrator writes that "hunger and weakness had made a coward of him" (p. 435).

Realistically, some problems we have in life oftentimes result from our actions. There are some sufferings that we create while blaming others. In a real sense, there is a danger in womanizing. Men who run after women to satisfy their sexual drives risk their lives. Those who do so sooner or later pay a heavy price. They either lose their life which can take any form or they get sick. Our particular case study demonstrates that a man can commit suicide if he reduces his life only to sex. This happens because, as Ed Young has it, "for many, sex has become nothing more than a recreational activity, a fun diversion unrelated to any kind of love or commitment" (2003, p. 128).

Drouet's later discussion with Carrie unveils some realities of Hurstwood. One striking remark made about him is that anything you do without serious thought, you will always regret it. Drouet says about him: "A man always makes a mistake when he does anything like that" (Coates, 1907). The 'anything like that' here speaks volumes about Hurstwood's hidden past. People do not often weigh the long-term consequences of their current actions until it is too late. In life, every choice we make bears its consequences. When you choose to act with extreme precaution, the result will come accordingly. Sometimes, people tend to ignore their past actions when they are amidst hardships. All they do is blame others and even on nature.

The last scene of George Hurstwood is no good at all. In some of his final talks with Carrie, who is now acting in a New York Casino, the reader is astounded to see how Hurstwood's life has become. He barely gets money to treat himself when he falls sick. On one occasion, he complains to Carrie: "I've been sick...I've just got out of the hospital. For God's sake, let me have a little money, will you?" (p. 443). It is the nature of human beings, when things go wrong and they need you, they will pretend to be humble and friendly toward you. But when they get it or when their condition improves a bit, they become different and can even ignore those who helped them before. This applies to both females and males (Houndjo, 2018).

Oftentimes, when some women climb social ladders and become public figures, many of these women either neglect the men who were their driving force or find other new men of their social status. This is true for Carrie. A village girl—in today's parlance—from Columbia City, Carrie quickly got attention from some emasculated men and there she is now: a public figure in New York, a renowned singer in a casino. The narrator gets it right when he states at the onset of the book: "When a girl leaves 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" (Desai, 1972).

Although the writer's full intent in this paper is not to blame the female character, she nevertheless deserves some attention for being the bone of contention between our male characters. Also, it is vital that everyone finds his or her part and needs to be held accountable in whichever way we deem appropriate. Thus, as she becomes famous, so to speak, we are informed that she now and then tells her former lovers and losers that she no longer has time. She is out, she would echo them. Or, "so peculiar, indeed, was her lonely, self-withdrawing temper, that she was becoming an interesting figure in the public eye—she was so quiet and reserved" (p. 444).

What has become of our Hurstwood and Drouet in Carrie's life now? They are all people of the past. As the story reads: "In the hurry of departure, Hurstwood was forgotten. Both he and Drouet were left to discover that she was gone. The latter called once and exclaimed at the news. Then he stood in the lobby, chewing the ends of his moustache. At last, he concluded—the old days had gone for good" (p. 444).

All this should serve as an example and lesson to Drouet and Hurstwood in particular that in life, one needs not hurry. For, as the saying goes, "marriage in haste, regret at leisure," our poor Hurstwood does truly suffer. His latter days, as discussed much earlier, were undesirable. Worse of all, we are told, he commits suicide. This is painful so much so that one hardly has to do away with it. The coming passage says it all about Hurstwood's last minutes before he vanishes: "That's right...I'm no good now. I was all right. I had money... And with death in his heart, he started down toward the Bowery. People had turned on the gas before and died; why shouldn't he? He remembered a lodging house where there were little, close rooms, with gas jets in them, almost prearranged, he thought, for what he wanted to do" (p. 454).

Sometimes, one wonders what happens to heroes, well-respected personalities, and responsible men who change all of a sudden and collapse simply in the name of love. Why on earth would someone spend his hard-earned money on a woman who is not legally yours? A clear look at Hurstwood's life, tells us that one should be watchful when dealing with women. Not that one should fear them, but one should not take them for granted. Because, as Carrie has done to this man, leaving him after she becomes a public figure in the Casino Company and having her name on poster board—a sign of success, who knows if other men would not fall victim under similar conditions.

Carrie is no longer Carrie, but Miss Madenda. And the more she reaches the top, the more Hurstwood deteriorates. He could not reach out to Carrie or else he would be thrown out like a dog from a park: "I want to see Miss Madenda," he tried to explain, even as he was being hustled away...The man gave him a last push and closed the door. As he did so, Hurstwood slipped and fell in the snow. It hurt him and some vague sense of shame returned. He began to cry and swear foolishly" (pp. 456-57). Meanwhile, Carrie is enjoying a vigorous and flourishing career and life: "In her comfortable chambers at the Waldorf, Carrie was reading at this time *Père Goriot*" (p. 457).

Here comes a paradigm shift. Hurstwood has lost his power. Over the years, he has been craving for power and since he could not attain it, we see that his collapse is notable. In essence, if he accepted his humble beginning and continued working, he would have become a very respectable person throughout his life. Since he refuses to give

heed to his inner voice, there he is. According to Jones, “he loses his self-respect, while his expression of manhood becomes rapidly stultified, collapsing into a supine drooping, an ineffectual, irritating, clinging, and complaining manner” (p. 76).

Hurstwood seems to have forgotten that the American Dream is in vogue and that money claims the first loyalty. If you have, you can be included, but if you do not, the system itself excludes without mercy. Once Carrie has tasted the sweetness of money, there is no stopping her, not even Hurstwood. After all, what does he have if it is not stolen? The book informs us that when Drouet gives Carrie money for the first time, “[s]he felt bound to him by a strange tie of affection now. The money she had accepted was two soft, green, handsome ten-dollar bills” (p. 62). This should have been a warning sign to Hurstwood since he befriends Drouet and should have learned that the former common girl, has gone beyond their grasp because of money.

When a man loses his manhood, he loses his identity. When his identity is not there, then, he cannot recognize his right from the left. For instance, when our fellow Hurstwood gives in to Carrie, we realize that he cannot control his senses and emotions. What follows next is moral decay and Jones remarks that “no early moral or mental influences stand in the way of habits to which Hurstwood may be prone—he lacks training in reason and introspection” (p. 78).

Interestingly, one may wonder what comes over Dreiser’s male characters in this book. How come that well-built and well-positioned men, so to say, would give up all their mannerism, their manhood, and morality to vanish in a twinkle of an eye? After ferreting for an answer, one realizes that these characters might either be suffering from some psychological ills or are beyond social redemption.

It is often stated that we reap what we sow. When you do good, you will meet it on your way. You cannot cheat people and be left unpunished. When you steal someone’s property, make sure you get paid accordingly. To me, Hurstwood’s suicide in the end attests to the aftermath of his sin. Although Boynton argues that Hurstwood’s last glimpse “reveals him not punished, but rewarded with his latest love,” I believe that he is punished instead (p. 183).

Hurstwood is a buccaneer. It is polemical when Jones thinks that Hurstwood’s downfall comes from the mainstream culture arguing that “the narrative pressures that drive Hurstwood’s peculiar fate...can only be understood in light of the highly publicized and deeply contentious debates over homelessness, dependency and persistent want that emerged in an era of economic turmoil” (p. 64). To paraphrase him, he seems to claim that the misfortune of this man results from societal challenges as though others do not go through the same hardships. If we credit Jones, we will take Hurstwood innocent. He should not be blameless. All the woes he suffers are his own making and should not be shared.

It must be recalled that both Drouet and Hurstwood are not mature and end up acting childishly. Ruspín terms their attitude as “immature and infantile” (Frohock, 1972). This immaturity is destructive and has been deteriorating American society. This lack of maturity has ruined Hurstwood’s life forever. As the story ends, our friend commits suicide by turning on the gas in the cubicle of a doss house in the Bowery. And here come his last words: “What’s the use?” (p. 456). Well, now he could see the futility of his wasted life. Should he not have been aware of this in the very beginning and perhaps repented?

## 4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to show men’s weakness vis-à-vis women’s beauty. Indeed, Dreiser’s male characters, Drouet and Hurstwood, represent this weakness. Indeed, by surrendering to sexual pleasure, both dig their own grave and get buried. No matter how spoilt the world might be, one is not obliged to follow its rhythm. Even if the American system pauperizes people, some are still making ends meet. In a real sense, one has to blame these male characters for their failure. One should not sympathize with Hurstwood who ruins his life and eventually commits suicide. Had he stayed with his family and continued his job, he would not have lost his life. In a word, this paper suggests that men should control their sexual drive and be real men. A real man should not diminish himself before common women. To be a man is to be responsible and anyone who refrains from doing so should expect what happens to Hurstwood. Life is one and one should not shorten it through one’s childishness. We need to be guided by conscience and live responsibly.

*Conflict of interest statement*

The author declared that he has no competing interests.

*Statement of authorship*

The author has a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author has approved the final article.

*Acknowledgements*

I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on the earlier version of this paper.

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