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L. ASHLEY SQUIRES

The Tragedy of Desire: Christian Science in Theodore Dreiser's *The "Genius"*

In 1918, Upton Sinclair published *The Profits of Religion*, an impassioned screed against organized religions that he perceived as fleecing the poor and the ignorant. Though virtually every religious group with a presence in the U.S. is placed on notice, the author reserves a special sort of criticism for Christian Science—the mental healing movement led Mary Baker Eddy to argue that the body and therefore all physical infirmities were not real—calling it “the most characteristic of American religious contributions.”¹ Invoking a number of extant stereotypes about the gender, education, and socio-economic condition of Eddy's followers, Sinclair attributes the movement's widespread popularity during the early-twentieth century to rank ignorance: “Just as Billy Sunday is the price we pay for failing to educate our base-ball players, so Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy is the price we pay for failing to educate our farmer's daughters.”² A few months following the appearance of Sinclair's book, Stephen Alison—a Christian Scientist, socialist, and co-editor of the New Orleans *Christian Scientist*³—published a rebuttal and deputized another famous author, journalist, and social justice advocate into his argument:

I suppose that you do read sometimes the novels of other novelists, and it is by no means unlikely that you have read “The Genius,” by Theodore Dreiser, a great novel which has been ruthlessly suppressed by a tyrannical Mrs. Grundyism that tolerates so much infamous trash; but it is quite obvious that Dreiser's work was suppressed because he saw so completely through the conventional lies of our civilization and did not bow down to nor adore them. Several chapters toward the end of “The Genius” deal with Eugene Witla's experiences in connection with the application of Christian Science to the problems of his

existence; and Dreiser has at least endeavored to honestly comprehend the message of Christian Science. He does not make the mistake of confusing it with hypnotism or the operation of the “sub-conscious mind.” In case you do not care to read more carefully the volume of “Science and Health” which you purchased,—to get “The Genius” cost me twice as much—if you have Dreiser’s novel or can borrow it from someone who has it, for, of course, it is not to be found in the libraries,—it would be well for you to review the chapters in it dealing with Christian Science. I do not say that they are perfect, but they show a sympathetic and intelligent understanding and he discerns the difference between the spiritual and metaphysical conception of God and Infinite Mind, and the feeble counterfeit belief in the operation of human will-power, as manifested in connection with the human mind. Dreiser may be more of a realist than an artist in words, but he is at least desirous of getting his facts straight and takes pains to do so.⁴

Though Dreiser himself never converted to Christian Science as his sisters and first wife did, Alison had ample reason to believe that he had found in the famous author a fellow traveler or, at the very least, a sympathetic interlocutor between Christian Scientists and the world of skeptical literary and intellectual elites. The final sixty pages of *The “Genius”*—derisively called “the Christian Science fugue” by Dreiser’s friend Edward H. Smith—contain a thorough exegesis of Eddy’s writings that places her teachings in conversation with the other metaphysical and scientific theories that preoccupied Dreiser at the time. The novel fictionalizes his nervous breakdown amid the fallout of *Sister Carrie*, the collapse of his marriage to Sarah “Jug” White, and his abortive affair with Thelma Cudlipp. During that final crisis, “Dreiser and Jug had consulted with [Christian Science] practitioners in the manner of contemporary couples visiting a marriage counselor,” according to Richard Lingeman.⁵ The author’s lifelong preoccupation with Christian Science turns up at various points in both his fictional and autobiographical writings but especially in this final section of *The “Genius.”*

It is difficult to imagine how Dreiser’s naturalism, with its vaunted obsession with the material and rejection of a higher moral order, could accommodate something like Christian Science, with its radical denial of the body, metaphysical complexity, and attendant asexuality. Indeed, Eddy argued that sex and reproduction were “errors” and illusions just like any other physical pathology. Yet given the context in which he and Jug began to consult the Christian Scientist practitioner, a context that Dreiser explores in the novel, Dreiser was arguably considering Christian Science as a solution to the psychological, philosophical, and moral problem of desire. Despite his reputation as a philanderer and materialist, Dreiser was haunted, especially in his youth, by a fear of its overwhelming and potentially destructive power. His ambivalence toward the desires of the body mirrors his ambivalence to-

ward American individualism and the desire for wealth. Due to their radical theories about the body and the nature of desire, Christian Scientists and proponents of its offshoots, such as the New Thought movement, were actively participating in debates about the moral and economic consequences of desire along with woman movement leaders and social justice advocates. Thus the Christian Science section of *The "Genius"* is best understood in the context of that ongoing cultural conversation.

Dreiser's Interest in Christian Science: An Overview

The "Genius" was neither a critical nor popular success, and as Rachel Bowlby indicates, "such sales as it did have were inflated by the notoriety that followed from suppression through the influence of a society for moral reform, and subsequent republication a decade later."⁶ Indeed, this novel became known less for its qualities or its content than for the scandal that surrounded its publication, the onslaught of "Mrs. Grundyism" that Alison mentions in his open letter to Sinclair. The author's frank treatment of Eugene Witla's sexual escapades provoked a campaign for suppression that Dreiser ultimately won. As Jerome Loving remarks in his review of the Dreiser Edition of *The "Genius,"* its eventual, belated publication "marked the general demise of puritanical censorship in literary America. In a way, this novel did for American literature what *Sister Carrie* had done—loosened the stranglehold of American moralists."⁷ As Clare Eby, editor of the Dreiser Edition of the novel, indicates, "The controversy confirmed what readers—both advocates and detractors—assumed about Dreiser, consolidating his public image as a rebel."⁸ This is an ironic legacy for a novel that, as Eby points out, was riddled with evidence of sexual conservatism and sentimentality—especially in the early stages of its composition—and features a hero contemplating a conversion to Eddy's famously asexual religion in the aftermath of a personally catastrophic affair. The scandal surrounding the novel's publication has encouraged readers to find in its narrative the triumph of masculine sexual liberation when, in truth, the novel is riddled with ambivalence about the consequences of unfettered male desire.

That ambivalence is even more pronounced when one compares the edition of the novel published in 1915 and the manuscript version of 1911, on which Eby's scholarly edition is based. The 1911 manuscript not only contains far more Christian Science jargon (including many references to "mortal mind" versus "divine mind") but reveals a Dreiser who is "attracted to conventional solutions and sentimental outcomes" and a hero who is

capable of settling down both romantically and metaphysically.⁹ As Eby indicates, “It reveals a Dreiser whose mature ideas of self, masculinity, artistic achievement, and worldly success were still in the process of formation.”¹⁰ Eby’s work on the 1911 holograph has illuminated the ways in which Dreiser often did not live up to his legacy as a “hard-headed, uncompromising realist” and sexual varietist, but I would argue that his ambivalence about sexuality, masculinity, and metaphysics are no more resolved in the 1915 edition than they are in the 1911 manuscript.¹¹ Ultimately, understanding the presence of Christian Science in the published version of the novel is essential to better understanding Dreiser.

Before proceeding any further, it would be helpful to document Dreiser’s relationship with and attitude toward Christian Science throughout his life in order to better place the Christian Science section of *The “Genius”* in context. Mame and Sylvia Dreiser, Theodore’s sisters, both converted to Christian Science as adults, and Sylvia eventually became a practitioner.¹² As early as 1901, Dreiser mentioned Christian Science approvingly in his *Harper’s* profile of William Louis Sonntag, Jr., later anthologized in *Twelve Men*.¹³ He references the theory of the mind’s power to overcome aging and death in Lester Kane’s deathbed scenes in *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), asserting that “man, even under his mortal illusion, is organically built to last five times the period of his maturity and would last as long as the spirit that is in him if he but knew that it is spirit which persists, that age is an illusion, that there is no death.”¹⁴ His memoirs also reveal that he was fond of discussing and debating Christian Science with friends. In *A Hoosier Holiday* (1916), he speaks of discussing the central principle of Christian Science with a friend who had recently converted,¹⁵ and just a few years earlier, in *A Traveler at Forty* (1913), he records an instance in which he recommended Christian Science to a Mrs. Grant Allen and her family:

On the way home, I remember, we discussed Christian Science and its relative physical merits in a world where all creeds and doctrines blow, apparently, so aimlessly about. Like all sojourners in this fitful fever of existence, Mrs. Grant Allen and her daughter and son, the cheerful Jerrard Grant Allen, were not without their troubles, so much so that being the intelligent woman that she was and quite aware of the subtleties and uncertainties of religious dogma, she was nevertheless eager to find something upon which she could lean, spiritually speaking—the strong arm, let us say, of an Almighty, no less, who would perchance heal her of her griefs and ills. . . . I think I established the metaphysical basis of life quite ably, for myself, and urged Mrs. Grant Allen to take up Christian Science.¹⁶

Dreiser clearly regarded Christian Science as a balm for the suffering soul, a spiritual recourse that was free from many of the trappings and limitations

of the major organized religions. It was a form of spirituality that even the educated and skeptical, those “aware of the subtleties and uncertainties of religious dogma” could lean on in a time of trouble.

In *Mechanism and Mysticism*, Louis Zanine discusses Dreiser’s fascination with Christian Science in the context of his other abiding interests in occult phenomena. From Dreiser’s perspective, these curiosities were compatible with his rigorous interests in modern science. His readings in *Science and Health*, his visits with psychics, and his fascination with theoretical physics, biology and Spencer were all of a piece, all part of his interest in the hidden workings of the universe. As Zanine argues, he remained fascinated by but ultimately dissatisfied with the modern scientific establishment “as he realized that scientists did not share his interest in the supernatural. He eventually grew impatient because they refused to investigate the mysterious, occult phenomena that so fascinated him.”¹⁷ When Eugene first encounters Christian Science following the collapse of his career and marriage in the 1915 version of *The “Genius,”* he finds himself contemplating the human condition:

He was one of those men who are metaphysically inclined. All his life he had been speculating on the subtleties of mortal existence, reading Spencer, Kant, Spinoza, at odd moments, and particularly such men as Darwin, Huxley, Tyn-dall, Lord Avebury, Alfred Russel Wallace, and latterly Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Crookes, trying to find out by the inductive, naturalistic method just what life was.¹⁸

He brings Eddy’s theories together with “chemistry and physics” to try to explain the problem of morality, where the moral laws that govern society originate. He finds confluences between *Science and Health* and Carlyle, who “had once said that ‘matter itself—the outer world of matter, was either nothing, or else a product due to man’s mind’” (694). He also compares Christian Science to theories about cell biology and physics, quoting at length from Edgar Lucien Larkin on the nature of invisible particles and Wallace on the hidden processes that govern the workings of the human body and the universe:

This [Wallace’s] very peculiar and apparently progressive statement in regard to the conclusion which naturalistic science had revealed in regard to the universe struck Eugene as pretty fair confirmation of Mrs. Eddy’s contention that all was mind and its infinite variety and that the only difference between her and the British scientific naturalists was that they contended for an ordered hierarchy which could only rule and manifest itself according to its own ordered or self-imposed laws, which they could perceive or detect, whereas she contended for a governing spirit which was everywhere and would act through ordered laws and powers of its own arrangement. (699)

According to Zanine, while Dreiser (and Eugene) would ultimately reject Christian Science's "denial of the existence of evil in the universe, he agreed completely with Mrs. Eddy's assertion that 'there is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-All.'"¹⁹ Furthermore, Dreiser believed that "the pantheistic conception of an imminent creator was completely consistent with the findings of science."²⁰

Such beliefs still placed the author somewhat outside the mainstream. His eccentricity in this regard distressed his friends and colleagues, who saw in these flights of fancy the last remaining traces of the Indiana rube in this enlightened, sophisticated visionary. According to Lingeman, H.L. Mencken was allegedly horrified to find Christian Science magazines in the home of Dreiser and Jug when he visited them in 1911, assuming that Jug was "a deluded believer. To him, Mary Baker Eddyism was the worst kind of pious snake oil."²¹ For this reason, "Dreiser apparently hadn't told Mencken of his own interest in Christian Science, or else passed it off as mere scientific curiosity, knowing the other's violent dislike of any sort of 'spiritualism.'"²² In January 1921, Edward H. Smith wrote Dreiser a letter about the novelist's religious and superstitious tendencies:

I fear me, and with very deep concern, that Theodore Dreiser's mind turns ever a little more toward metaphysical symbols and signs. I shudder at your interest in that awful mess of a twaddle which Fort made into a book. I tremble at the Christian Science fugue in the end of *The "Genius."* Your plays of the supernatural rather appal [sic] me.²³ I find you playing more and more with metaphysical terms and ideas—perhaps unconsciously—in much of your later work.²⁴

Dreiser was offended by his friend's insinuations. Smith takes a rather transparent stab at Dreiser's humble background, referring to his "religious parentage," the author's father having been an almost fanatically devout Catholic. "Men do not leap out of such trends in a single generation," says Smith.²⁵ In his response to Smith, Dreiser frames his interest as a sort of academic one and suggests that the true value of religion is in soothing the aches of lesser minds:

Religion is a bandage for sore brains. Morality, ditto. It is the same as a shell to a snail. The blistering glare of indefinable forces would destroy most, were it not for the protecting umbrella of illusion. That was what I meant when I said that Franklin Booth had been aided by Christian Science. He was looking for a blanket under which to crawl, and he found it. Eugene Witla was in the same position. I tried to show just how it was that he came to dabble with Christian Science, and why, in the long run it failed to hold him. Having recovered a part of his mental strength he shed it, as a snake does a skin. I have

never been under any illusion in regard to religion, morality, metaphysical fiddle-faddle. I had my fill in my youth. Today I want facts but I am not to be denied the right to speculate in my own way and I have no fear that I shall be led into any religious or moral bog. I am much too sane for that. If you see signs, kindly let me know.²⁶

This, he claims, is why he approved of Franklin's conversion to Christian Science and even sought it out himself in his weaker moments. Nevertheless, the defensive tone of this retort suggests that perhaps he protested a little too much.

For some scholars, Dreiser's interest in Christian Science remains one of the most inscrutable aspects of his legacy. Bill Brown briefly acknowledges it: "Though Dreiser himself was genuinely interested in Christian Science (and in Quakerism), its passing role in the novel should be read as a measure of his inability to imagine a resolution to worldly problems within the confines of materialism."²⁷ Discussions of Christian Science in the Eby edition and in Pizer's essays on the novel are quite limited and connect Christian Science to Eugene's other philosophical musings in only the most cursory way.²⁸ But this barely understood section of this little examined novel does, in fact, tell us something important about the author and about American culture, and it also, I contend, presents an opportunity to reflect on the way Dreiser's legacy has been shaped. The Dreiser of a certain critical imagination is a Dreiser who flouted convention, who pushed back Victorian prudery, who championed naturalistic, scientific thinking, and shunned moralistic sentimentality. This moment in *The "Genius"* does, in a very real way, challenge that perception. It presents us with a Dreiser who was profoundly insecure about his philosophical and religious orientation and about his own masculinity, a Dreiser who was attempting to navigate that uncertain territory in print without arriving at any firm conclusions, leaving us instead with a hero who both embraces and restrains his desire, who can mentally accommodate both Eddy and Spencer.

Eugene, in Pizer's estimation, is a defective hero who must inevitably give way to Frank Cowperwood, who as a manly hero presented "a means of fulfilling in fiction, as [Dreiser] had not in life, that part of his nature which viewed strength and shrewdness as the only means by which beauty could be won in the face of a restrictive social morality."²⁹ The stakes for this novel are gendered, though in thickly coded terms. *The "Genius"* presents us with a Dreiser who is feminized by his uncertainty, by his misgivings about wholeheartedly indulging in the objectified beauty of women—here placed by the critic alongside art objects—by his "introspective" and "emotional temperament" and his vulnerability to such female identified traits as "conscience, pity, introspection and indecision." And indeed, his interest in

the metaphysical musings of a female religious visionary whose career little resembled those of the more acceptably masculine naturalists to whom he compares her would be similarly unmanly. Yet the author of *The "Genius"* is, I argue, an author as worthy of critical engagement as the author of *The Financier*, and an understanding of where the two meet, how they negotiate the lines of gender and authority, helps us understand Dreiser's opus better, and comprehending the historical and cultural significance of Christian Science to these negotiations of desire is essential to that understanding.

Desire and Gender Ideology in the Turn of the Century U.S.

The moral implications of desire were far-reaching in a period permeated by the biological determinism of evolutionary theory and Social Darwinism. Desire could be an economic force as well as a sexual one, a force that had the power to shape society for good or ill in addition to shaping individual lives. As Beryl Satter's monumental history of the New Thought movement—a dissenting offshoot of Christian Science—indicates, late-nineteenth century white middle-class Americans were engaged in a debate over whether the key to Anglo Saxon "race progress" was masculine desire or feminine spirituality, "whether manly 'desire' was the fuel of competition and hence progress, or whether it was the poisonous threat to civilization that must be contained by womanly altruism and spirituality."³⁰ On one side of the debate were "prominent white male theorists," who "drew upon medical, anthropological, and evolutionary discourses to demonstrate 'scientifically' the ironclad linkages between male desire, female domesticity, industrial capitalist society, and the development of the Anglo-Saxon race."³¹ One such theorist was Spencer, a hero of Dreiser's, who asserted that it is "criminal" to "deprive men, in any way, of liberty to pursue the objects they desire, when it was appointed to insure them that liberty."³² On the other side were "white female activists," who "heralded themselves as the epitome of Anglo-Saxon racial development" and "claimed science as a womanly spiritual discourse, promoted cooperation over capitalism, and strategized toward the final eradication of devolutionary male desire."³³

Yet, as Gail Bederman reminds us, gender is "a historical, ideological process" that results in "many contradictory ideas" about gender and gendered expression.³⁴ American society vacillated between gendered ideals of unfettered desire and restraint throughout the nineteenth century as the dominant culture attempted to position itself in a rapidly changing and diversifying world. This gave way to a variety of expressions of and prescriptions about gender. As Bederman indicates, Progressive men idealized both

“chest-thumping virility, vigorous outdoor athleticism, and fears of feminization” while also exhibiting a “growing interest in erstwhile ‘feminine’ occupations like parenthood and domesticity.”³⁵ One theory of manhood, associated primarily—but not exclusively—with the antebellum period, held that men were supposed to “embody rationality, will power, and self-control.”³⁶ Manly restraint was what legitimized the patriarch’s authority “to protect and direct those weaker than himself: his wife, his children, or his employees.”³⁷ Men were instructed to conserve their life force by avoiding masturbation and other forms of sexual license. Similar theories about the limited nature of the body’s resources influenced the diagnosis and treatment of neurasthenia or “nervous exhaustion.” In 1881, physician George Miller Beard defined neurasthenia as a “deficiency or lack of nerve-force,” characterized by a variety of symptoms from chronic exhaustion to dyspepsia to headaches and sexual dysfunction.³⁸ Beard theorized that individuals had a limited amount of nervous energy which tended to be too rapidly depleted by the forces of modern civilization and performance of “brain work.” It is perhaps no surprise that Christian Science emerged in a culture already preoccupied with the interactions between mind and body and enjoyed considerable success in treating cases of neurasthenia.³⁹

According to Satter, gender ideology and gendered conceptions of desire shifted in the post-Civil War era as “in a society of increasing economic complexity, white men found that hard work and self-discipline bore little relation to economic success.”⁴⁰ The shifting demographics of the city and the entrance of white middle class women into higher education and the professions also catalyzed the reconfiguration of white middle class male identity as aggressive and desiring rather than rational and restrained: “The anthropological scenario depicted male desire—for money, offspring, fame, or success—as the driving force behind progress and civilization.”⁴¹ The re-orientation of middle class attitudes toward desire also shaped (and was shaped by) a reconfiguration of middle class life around leisure and consumption rather than labor and production.⁴² Advertisers directed their efforts toward the creation of new desires rather than the fulfillment of conventional needs. The white middle-class culture of restraint became a culture of entitlement, though that entitlement was mostly the purview of the white men whose sense of rightful authority and power had been challenged by women, immigrants, working class whites, and ethnic minorities. Evolutionary biologists and sociologists like Spencer were convinced that the channeling of male desire toward productive economic pursuits was essential, not only to individual prosperity, but to the progress of the Anglo-Saxon race, which was deemed by white Victorians as naturally superior to all others.

This valorization of male desire was accompanied by the reassignment of women to the domestic role of enabling but never emulating that desire and aggressiveness.⁴³ Many female activists dissented from this last view even as they accepted the notion that men were naturally aggressive and desiring while women were innately passionless and nurturing. Some of these women expressed the opinion that the advancement of civilization depended not upon male desire and individualism but feminine cooperation and altruism.⁴⁴ As Charlotte Perkins Gilman argued in *Women and Economics* (1900), “Human progress lies in the perfecting of the social organization.”⁴⁵ She goes on to describe the myriad ways in which the trappings of civilization—“the linking of humanity together across ocean and mountain and desert plain by steam and electricity, in the establishment of such world-functions as the international postal service”—fosters sympathy and cooperation among diverse peoples and nations.⁴⁶ Women, due to their superior morality and role as guardians of relationship, were, according to this theory, uniquely designed to be the ambassadors of middle-class Anglo-Saxon virtue. This renegotiation of Victorian gender ideology provided an argument for women’s expanded participation in the public sphere.

These early feminists found common cause with various progressive and social justice movements, and many of these activists found their way to Christian Science and offshoots like New Thought. Woman movement leaders and social justice activists tended to view aggressive male desire as a social evil, responsible for such abominations as rape (including marital rape) and forced pregnancy but also the exploitation of the poor and the volatility of the market with its catastrophic boom and bust cycles. Male desire was linked not only to the sexual oppression of women but to the aggressive pursuit of individual wealth at all costs. According to Satter, the valorization of female desirelessness and cooperation was why

the Knights of Labor, the Farmers’ Alliance, and Bellamyite Nationalists not only encouraged women’s participation in their ranks, but also supported temperance, women’s suffrage, and social purity. These alliances were possible because by the last quarter of the nineteenth century reformers of all sorts began to understand the social chaos around them in heavily gendered terms. The Knights of Labor, the Grange, the Alliance and Populist movements, the Single-Taxers, and the Bellamyite Nationalists all hoped to implement politically the ideals of cooperation rather than conflict, harmonious sharing rather than cutthroat competition, and rational planning rather than unimpeded personal greed. As some woman movement leaders saw it, these were the values of refined womanhood, not lustful manhood.⁴⁷

These arguments about both gender and social organization also tended to be made with reference to shifting theories about the nature of the body

and the mind. As gender ideology shifted toward the notions of male carnality versus female spirituality, women and the movements they led became more closely allied to theories that subordinated the material world to the spiritual or, in the case of Christian Science, did away with the material world altogether.

Let us return for a moment to Alison and Boyd for an example of how early feminism, socialism, and Christian Science found common cause. Alison saw Christian Science as the missing piece that completed the socialist ideal and at one point reflected ruefully that his fellow travelers in Great Britain, where he was heavily involved in social justice movements, were not influenced by the U.S.-based Christian Science movement: "A better understanding of that form of teaching which Mary Baker Eddy has made familiar to many in 'Science and Health,' supplies an adequate solution [to the divisions between secular and Christian socialists], which, had it been known to Socialists and Secularists . . . would have given them both a common platform to stand on."⁴⁸ Christian Science and New Thought critiqued capitalism by appealing to the illusory nature of material wealth. A letter attributed to "an early student of Mrs. Eddy" and published in the *Christian Scientist* advances the argument that "by handling money we handle every human belief of disease. We lust upon intellect, money, friends, home, etc., and what is the result? Death. The moment we begin to see that money as money does not exist, but that it is the idea that supports, strengthens, cares for and sustains us in every way, we are beginning at the foundation."⁴⁹ As Alison would similarly state, "False theology, and cut-throat competition, causing ruthless rivalry among humans, is a logical result of the belief in the material origin of man, that humans are children of men, instead of children of God, and the concomitant belief in the 'good old rule—the simple plan, That they should take who have the power, And they should keep who can.'"⁵⁰ Those who advanced Christian Science and social justice together saw hope in a society structured by Love, a concept that Eddy returns to over and over again in *Science and Health*, an empathy engendered by the recognition that material possessions are unreal and human minds are interdependent. Christian Scientists echoed the familiar arguments about women's role as ambassadors of this superior model of social organization. As Eddy claimed in *Retrospection and Introspection*, "woman must give it birth," speaking of Christian Science and the spiritual revolution that it was supposed to engender.⁵¹ While men participated widely in the movement, many Christian Scientists believed that men must learn womanly virtues in order to be spiritually uplifted. As that same student of Eddy's wrote in the *Christian Scientist*, "Man is to be redeemed through the woman thought, and that visibly expressed, else it is not Science."⁵²

Cooperation between Christian Scientists, woman movement leaders, and social justice advocates in a critique of aggressive desire as economic and sexual force was hardly universal. Eddy and her followers were routinely criticized for their supposed hypocrisy in charging money for their spiritual healing services, and many Christian Scientists turned to healing, teaching, and lecturing as a means of economic self-support.⁵³ Likewise, as Satter demonstrates, certain branches of Christian Science and New Thought used the same basic metaphysical principles to *justify* an aggressive pursuit of individual gain, a line of thought that runs straight through Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* to the current incarnation of Prosperity Gospel. Nevertheless, it is clear that a select number of Americans who shared the middle class ambivalence toward gendered conceptions of desire saw in Christian Science, with its elimination of desire as a necessary or even present force in human existence, a possible solution to their dilemma.

Dreiser's Ambivalence toward Desire

Dreiser exhibited ambivalence about both desire and the capitalist project throughout his life. As an adolescent he was simultaneously sexually precocious and horrified by the immediacy of his own urges. As he reports in *Dawn*, he was troubled by his preoccupation with girls, and his proclivity for the "ridiculous and unsatisfactory practice of masturbation" also troubled him. According to Lingeman, he became convinced that masturbation was causing him irreparable harm: "Theodore decided he was having a nervous breakdown, which was nature's way of restoring his system to 'parity.' . . . He retained the Victorian belief that emissions of semen represent a sort of overdraft on one's 'energy bank.'"⁵⁴ Though he wrote in 1931 of the ridiculousness of these superstitions, such fantasies about the consequences of desire plagued his early sexual experiences and emerged in his novels. He has the narrator of *The "Genius"* attribute Eugene's neurasthenic condition to overindulgence in the sexual act with his wife Angela, the fictional surrogate for Jug: "He had no knowledge of the effect of one's sexual life upon one's work, nor what such a life when badly arranged can do to a perfect art" (246). This assertion echoes Beard's theory that "indulgence of appetites and passions" was among the many causes of neurasthenia.⁵⁵ Eugene is instructed to abstain from such relations but has difficulty obeying: "He was continuing his passional relations with Angela, in spite of a growing judgment that they were in some way harmful to him. But it was not easy to refrain, and each failure to do so made it harder" (252). This section of the novel is apparently an accurate depiction of Dreiser's own

sense that sexual overindulgence was to blame for his chronic ill health and depression following the publication of *Sister Carrie*.⁵⁶

Equally terrifying was the less fantastical possibility of disease or pregnancy as a result of sex. In *Dawn*, he speaks of his inaugural sexual experience with the wanton daughter of a local baker and the fear that perhaps she had given him a venereal disease.⁵⁷ He also observed the results of his sisters' sexual misadventures, two of them having become pregnant out of wedlock while Dreiser was a youth, bringing down his father's wrath and inviting social ignominy upon his family. His early relationships as a struggling journalist in Chicago were tainted by the fear that an unwanted pregnancy would tie him down and destroy his prospects. Lingeman suggests that such fears were behind the performance issues (in the form of premature ejaculation) that Dreiser reported in early drafts of *Newspaper Days*:

It was a measure of how tightly the old bugaboos about masturbation gripped him that years later Dreiser thought of his precipitousness as "impotence." In a passage later expurgated from *Newspaper Days*, he writes "though I ejaculated copiously, I still imagined I was impotent due to youthful errors and bordering on senility." . . . Dreiser's anxiety served as a psychic coitus interruptus. It induced a compulsion to withhold that was overridden by his strong desire, with the result that he "spent" uncontrollably. *Had* the affair [with Lois] progressed, he would have felt obligated to "do right" by Lois even if they didn't have a child, and he didn't want to marry her.⁵⁸

As his marriage to Sarah "Jug" White soured, Dreiser was similarly worried about the way in which pregnancy would imprison him and destroy the object of desire and affection that he had so idealized: "Jug begged him to let her have a child, thinking that fatherhood would steady him. But he adamantly refused, as he had throughout their marriage. . . . He told her that giving birth would ruin her figure, the implication being that she would become unattractive to him. And, obviously, he disliked the idea of having a child because it would strengthen her hold over him."⁵⁹ The choice to have Angela contrive to get pregnant against Eugene's will in *The "Genius"* is perhaps a reflection of Dreiser's fears about the way in which sexual relationships might tether him to a woman he no longer desired.

And indeed, the type of women that Dreiser desired was mediated by a Victorian cultural milieu that idealized female purity. Lingeman reports that "Dreiser's sexual nature was split: one part of him was drawn to women of experience who were openly sensual and took the lead in the affair ('made their way' with him). But another part sought an ideal, which meant fresh, young girls with petal-smooth faces and innocent eyes, like the nymph in the painting 'September Morn.'"⁶⁰ The split nature of the author's desire is reflected in his accounts of Eugene's early affairs. As a young artist try-

ing to make his way in New York City, he dallies with sexually experienced, sophisticated women with artistic careers of their own, women like Christina Channing (a brilliant contralto) and Miriam Finch (an accomplished sculptor and intellectual). He entertains himself with these women even as Angela Blue, to whom he is engaged, pines away in her father's house. Eugene idealizes the pure, unsullied Angela and the example of clean Christian living that her family embodies, and once he deflowers his fiancé in her family's home Eugene feels a profound sense of shame and loss, though he primarily feels guilty about betraying Jotham Blue, Angela's father, in his own home:

Eugene felt that Jotham believed him to be an honest man. He knew he had that appearance. He was frank, genial, considerate, not willing to condemn anyone—but this sex question—that was where he was weak. And was not the whole world keyed to that? Did not the decencies and the sanities of life depend on right moral conduct? Was not the world dependent on how the homes were run? How could anyone be good if his mother and father had not been good before him? How would the children of the world expect to be anything if people rushed here and there holding illicit relations? Take his sister Myrtle now—would he have wanted her rifled in this manner? (181)

After their tryst, the novel takes a dark turn in which Angela threatens to drown herself if Eugene tries to back out of their engagement: “Angela had thrown herself on his mercy and his sense of honor to begin with. She had extracted a promise of marriage—not urgently, and as one who sought to entrap him, but with the explanation that otherwise life must end in disaster for her” (183). Yet Dreiser makes it clear that Eugene does feel trapped and later resents both the forced promise and the social conventions that made her demand it. Lingeman, however, calls this reimagining of Dreiser and Jug's relationship “history soured by disillusionment. The truth was that Theodore's own desires trapped him, and his need for Sara was strong and more than just physical.”⁶¹ The big problem with desire, for Dreiser, was its consequences, though he blamed socially enforced monogamy and moral conventions more than anything else for the direness of those consequences. In the 1915 version of *The “Genius,”* Angela's conventionality—especially compared to the sexually liberated Christina Channing, who has no marriage aspirations—forces Eugene into an untenable situation. It is also Angela's conventionality that causes her to thwart his affair with Suzanne Dale—the fictional surrogate for Thelma Cudlipp.⁶²

Dreiser was also concerned about the economic and social implications of desire. Calling the Cowperwood series “the Trilogy of Desire” is a reference both to Cowperwood's pursuit of beautiful women—in the form of Aileen Butler and Berenice Fleming—and his relentless pursuit of wealth.

Cowperwood is a kind of Spencerian hero, one who accurately assesses the social order as a young man at the beginning of *The Financier*, seeing a lobster slowly feeding on a squid in a tank on the street, and applies it to his business dealings. While Cowperwood is undoubtedly idealized for his individualism and financial brilliance, Dreiser also depicts the dark side of this culture of economic predation: political scandal, catastrophic boom and bust cycles, forces that grind men into poverty even more readily than they elevate him to exalted prosperity. According to Lingeman, Cowperwood “embodied a conflict within Dreiser. On the one hand he admired and envied the famous rogue builders of American capitalism, reflecting his own boyhood ambitions. . . . On the other, his acute sense of social justice condemned them as exploiters of the common people.”⁶³

Likewise, *The “Genius”* depicts just how readily society will throw away a formerly celebrated citizen. The first half of the novel traces Eugene’s meteoric rise as an artist only then to depict his catastrophic fall as his neurasthenic condition prevents him from producing new paintings for a prolonged period. His sickness is written on his very body, causing the powerful people who once elevated his work to shun him, including M. Charles, the gallery manager who launched his career:

Eugene’s mental state, so depressed, so helpless, so fearsome—a rudderless boat in the dark, transmitted itself as an impression, a wireless message to all those who knew him or knew of him. His breakdown, which had first astonished M. Charles, depressed and then weakened the latter’s interest in him. Like all other capable, successful men in the commercial world M. Charles was for strong men—men in the heyday of their success, the zenith of their ability. The least variation from this standard of force and interest was noticeable to him. If a man was going to fail—going to get sick and lose his interest in life or have his viewpoint affected, it might be very sad, but there was just one thing to do under such circumstances—get away from him. Failures of any kind were dangerous things to countenance. (298)

Once rejected by the artistic elites in Europe and New York, Eugene is forced to walk from store to store attempting to sell his paintings for a fraction of what they would have brought at the peak of his fame. There is a seemingly inescapable chain of causality at work here. Eugene’s overindulgence in sex leads to the depletion of his resources, which weakens him as a man and makes him a less viable commodity. In both a physical and economic sense, it unmans him and renders him abhorrent to the powerful men who prize vigor, who are looking, perhaps, for a desire that does not dissipate in the face of hardship. *The “Genius”* portrays capitalism as a thing that feeds on the desire and vitality of brilliant artistic minds, bleeds them dry, and then discards them.

In a very real way, desire, its brief flame so easily extinguished, is a reminder of human frailty and of the body's contingency. It is a sign of the temporality and futility of human pursuits. This is a problem that Eugene contemplates throughout the novel. At a key moment in Eugene and Angela's relationship, when the two nearly give in to their desires in the home of Angela's family (prior to the episode in which they actually do), Eugene reflects on the frailty of that desire and of the body itself, thinking,

“What is the human body? What produces passion? Here we are for a few years surging with a fever of longing and then we burn out and die.’ He thought of some lines he might write, of pictures he might paint. All the while, reproduced before his mind's eye like a cinematograph, were views of Angela as she had been tonight in his arms, on her knees.” (127)

The image of Angela on her knees is both a reminder of her physical and emotional vulnerability and the explosive potential of their physical attraction. “No harm had come,” he reflects, foreshadowing the impending disaster of their marriage (127). Later, reading “Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Lubbock,” he dwells morosely on the temporary nature of any human attraction or relationship: “To think that his life should endure but for seventy years and then be no more was terrible. He and Angela were chance acquaintances—chemical affinities—never to meet again in all time. He and Christina, he and Ruby—he and anyone—a few bright hours were all they could have together, and then would come the great silence, dissolution, and he would never be anymore.” Yet that impermanency makes him “all the more eager to live, to be loved while he was here” (157). It is in this state of mind that he finally persuades Angela to give in to him and then must later come to terms with the fact that in the fulfillment of that desire, something else may have been lost, a sense of purity and innocence: “This deed shamed him. And he asked himself whether he was wrong to be ashamed or not. Perhaps he was just foolish. Was not life made for living, not worrying? He had not created his passions and desires” (181).

Eugene's inexhaustible attraction to youth and innocence means that he harbors a desire which is forever forced to seek new objects, as the very act of possessing what he wants depletes her value in his eyes, making the women in his life the very sort of limited and disposable commodity he and his art prove to be. The narrator announces this tendency as a weakness, a tragedy waiting to happen:

The weakness of Eugene was that he was prone in each of these new conquests to see for the time being the sum and substance of bliss, to rise rapidly in the scale of uncontrollable, exaggerated affection, until he felt that here and nowhere else, now and in this particular form was ideal happiness. He had

been in love with Stella, with Margaret, with Ruby, with Angela, with Christina, and now with Frieda, quite in this way, and it had taught him nothing as yet concerning love except that it was utterly delightful. He wondered at times how it was that the formation of a particular face could work this spell. There was plain magic in the curl of a lock of hair, the whiteness or roundness of a forehead, the shapeliness of a nose or ear, the arched redness of full-blown petal lips. The cheek, the chin, the eye—in combination with these things—how did they work this witchery? The tragedies to which he laid himself open by yielding to these spells—he never stopped to think of them. (285)

The body, in this configuration of will and desire, is a kind of impenetrable mystery, a force wholly independent of human volition. The isolated components of the female body act almost as their own agents in this passage, just as Eugene's body responds to them before his mind can tease out the implications or contemplate the consequences of acting. Dreiser dissociates physical attraction from love, an emotion that he locates in some higher function of the mind. Love can be eternal, but attraction is not: "Hypnotic spells of this character like contagion and fever have their period of duration, their beginning, climax and end. It is written that love is deathless, but this was not written of the body nor does it concern the fevers of desire" (286). Dreiser asks whether human beings have any real agency over these forces:

It is a question whether the human will, of itself alone, ever has cured or ever can cure any human weakness. Tendencies are subtle things. They are involved in the chemistry of one's being, and those who delve in the mysteries of biology frequently find that curious anomaly, a form of minute animal life born to be the prey of another form of animal life—chemically and physically attracted to its own disaster. (285)

Eugene's course toward inevitable disaster is only arrested by an adjustment of this chaotic configuration of body and mind, desire and will. The final third of *The "Genius"* in the 1915 edition proceeds as follows: Eugene recovers from neurasthenia and launches a career as a commercial artist, first in advertising and then in magazine publishing, embracing the world of commodity by becoming one of those creators of desire. He and Angela remain childless, and for a time it seems that the protagonist has found a way of restraining his impulses. When Eugene reaches the pinnacle of his career and he and Angela become the toast of the New York social scene, his eye once again wanders, landing on the young, beautiful, and sophisticated Suzanne Dale, the fictional surrogate for Thelma Cudlipp. Lingeman characterizes Dreiser's real-life affair with Cudlipp as a sort of mid-life crisis, calling the author "acutely, even neurotically conscious of the passage of time" (246). Thelma/Suzanne is a desperate grasp for a

taste of youth and beauty, a desire so profound that Theodore/Eugene sacrifices his career and social standing for it. The girl's mother, both in the novel and in real life, alerts Theodore/Eugene's employers to the affair, and Theodore/Eugene is fired. She also convinces the girl to wait a year before seeking some sort of formal arrangement with her paramour, enough time for her desire to cool. In the novel, Eugene's willingness to trim and compromise, his failure to sweep her off her feet, all evidence that he was not "so powerful" as she had imagined, "so much a law unto himself," cause her to reconsider (671). Meanwhile, the fullness "of what [Eugene] had been doing began to dawn upon him dimly" (669). Angela succeeds in getting pregnant against Eugene's wishes, a ploy to get him to stay, and she dies in one of the most graphic scenes of death in childbirth ever to appear in American literature. It is in the midst of this crisis, a crisis that brings the contingency and consequences of desire, the frailty of the human body and the even greater weakness of the rational will into focus that Eugene is introduced to Christian Science.

Christian Science as Solution to the Problem of Desire

When Myrtle, Eugene's sister, attempts to use Christian Science to rehabilitate her brother at Angela's request, the problem she directly addresses is his waywardness. While Eugene resists the pathologization of his desire, both he and the narrator entertain the possibility that he might find relief from it through the study of Eddy's works. At a Christian Science service he hears the testimony of a man who seems to be very much like himself. Like Dreiser, this man threw off the religious principles of his father and led a life of dissipation. He gambled and drank, but "my great weakness was women. . . . I pursued women as I would any other lure. They were really all that I desired—their bodies. My lust was terrible. It was such a dominant thought with me that I could not look at any good-looking woman except, as the Bible says, to lust after her" (691). The man describes the outcome of his philandering by saying only "I became diseased." He saw many doctors who were unable to heal him completely and was ultimately "carried into the First Church of Christ Scientist in Chicago," where he became "a well man—not well physically only, but well mentally, and, what is better yet, in so far as I can see the truth, spiritually." Eugene is impressed with this man, not only because of his story, but because of his appearance: "He was no beggar or tramp, but a man of some profession—an engineer, very likely" (692). It is a sense of kinship with this man that precipitates his first serious reading of *Science and Health*. The fact that Eugene seems to pinpoint

his promiscuity as the disease to be cured makes it clear that he considers Christian Science as means of “curing” his desire.

Eugene reads *Science and Health* and considers its claims about the unreality of matter alongside similar claims by Carlyle, Marcus Aurelius, and Kant as well as the writings of the physicist Larkin, who argues that “this micro-universe is rooted and grounded in a mental base” (697). This begins that long philosophical section in which the protagonist finally reaches “a pretty fair confirmation of Mrs. Eddy’s contention that all was mind and its infinite variety and that the only difference between her and the British scientific naturalists was that they contended for an ordered hierarchy . . . whereas, she contended for a governing spirit” (699). Ultimately, he comes to see Christian Science as a possible solution to multiple problems pertaining to his marriage, his affair with Suzanne, and his depression. He takes heart in the fact that “Christian Science set aside marriage entirely as a human illusion,” alluding to the belief that Mind rendered human reproduction and consequently sex and marriage obsolete (701). He visits a practitioner and wonders if her methods will “make him not want Suzanne ever any more? Perhaps that was evil? Yes, no doubt it was. Still . . . Divinity could aid him if it would. Certainly it could. No doubt of it” (708). Upon returning home, his eyes fall upon the following passage from *Science and Health*: “Carnal beliefs defraud us. They make man an involuntary hypocrite—producing evil when he would create good, forming deformity when he would outline grace and beauty, injuring those whom he would bless. He becomes a general mis-creator, who believes he is a semi-God. His touch turns hope to dust, the dust we have all trod” (709). Eugene, applying these allusions to carnality, creation, and the distortion of beauty to his own situation, once again wonders if Divine Principle might conquer his desire for Suzanne, though he is unsure whether he actually wants this outcome.

After this period of reflection, Angela’s moment of crisis arrives. Already weakened by a nervous breakdown brought on by the Suzanne affair, Angela is not expected to survive the delivery of the child she conceived in order to make Eugene stay. The wrenching depiction of traumatic surgical childbirth that follows serves as another reminder of the physical consequences of sex and of the catastrophic implications of both Eugene’s wandering eye and Angela’s futile attempts to keep him. Seeing her torment, Eugene is struck by “the subtlety and terror of this great scheme of reproduction, which took all women to the door of the grave, in order that this mortal scheme of things might be continued. He began to think that there might be something in the assertion of the Christian Science leaders that it was a lie and an illusion, a terrible fitful fever outside the rational consciousness of God” (712). Christian Science does not liberate or cure Angela,

though it is worth noting that her doctors are also unable to save her. In the end, Dreiser brings his hero to a philosophical place that is wholly in line with neither Christian Science nor scientific materialism. The latter, in fact, seems to be as horrifying in its practical implications as the former is improbable. As Eugene watches the doctors perform a caesarean section, a procedure that is described in excruciating detail, what most horrifies him is the utter absence of dignity or humanity. Angela, as the patient, becomes a non-person, the doctors mere mechanics: "They were working like carpenters, cabinet workers, electricians. Angela might have been a lay figure for all they seemed to care." Even the child "might have been a skinned rabbit" (720). Yet it is this confrontation with mortality as well as the realization that humans are, in a very real way, helpless to overcome its inevitability no matter what theory of mind and body they embrace, which brings Eugene to a place of peace. He reconciles with Angela in the moments before her death and embraces sentimental fatherhood, raising his daughter alone. He continues to visit Mrs. Johns, the Christian Science practitioner, even though he can never wholeheartedly believe. In the end, he becomes something of a religious and philosophical eclectic, "an artist who, pagan to the core, enjoyed reading the Bible for its artistry of expression, and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Spinoza and James for the mystery of things which they suggested" (734).

This may be very like what Dreiser hoped for himself. As his later novels, particularly *The Bulwark*, demonstrate, the author retained an interest in religion and metaphysics. He and his partner Helen Richardson (the two of them cohabited for more than a decade before Jug granted Dreiser a divorce) even attended a Christian Science church in California during the final years of his life.⁶⁴ Christian Science never cured him of his ambivalence regarding desire and sexuality, though accompanied by the wisdom of experience, it may have helped him make peace with it. As the narrator of the novel declares, "the need for religion is impermanent, like all else in life," including desire (734).

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Notes

I would like to thank Philip Barrish, Brian Bremen, and Evan Carton for reading early drafts of this essay.

1. Upton Sinclair, *The Profits of Religion: An Essay in Economic Interpretation* (Pasadena: The Author, 1918), p. 257.

2. Sinclair, p. 257. Associating Christian Science with women and poor people was a textbook way of rhetorically dismissing it. But as Jean McDonald argues, "this organiza-

tion reputedly made up of enterprising American ‘kitchen hands’ in fact included a considerable body of *men* . . . a point that has been largely ignored both by nineteenth-century male commentators and by a surprising number of later academic writers. Could this be because, perceived through the lens of prevailing male stereotypes, a woman-led movement could not possibly be taken seriously by men? If so, those men who appeared to be taking it seriously could be written off as not ‘real’ men” (“Mary Baker Eddy and the Nineteenth-Century ‘Public’ Woman: A Feminist Reappraisal,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 2 [Spring 1986], 89–111).

3. In the *Christian Scientist*, Alison refers to his activities in the socialist movement in Great Britain, where he also contributed to socialist periodicals. Alison claims to have never formally affiliated with the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and his publication was not endorsed by the organization that Eddy founded.

4. Alison, “Christian Science Versus Organization: An Open Letter to Upton Sinclair,” *Christian Scientist*, 3 (September 1918), 2. Sinclair’s response to the open letter appears in the October 1918 edition of the *Christian Scientist* as follows: “Dear Comrade—I have read with interest your friendly open letter. I could not say all I had to say about Christian Science in the magazine. You will find more in the book. I have read *Science and Health*. I cannot go with it because I don’t believe in any sort of metaphysics. I have given my reasons in the latter part of ‘The Profits of Religion.’ I went through the whole game when I was in college—the metaphysics game I mean. There is nothing in it for me. Sincerely, U. Sinclair.”

5. Richard Lingeman, *Theodore Dreiser: An American Journey* (New York: Wiley, 1993), p. 264.

6. Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 72.

7. Jerome Loving, *American Literary Realism*, 43 (Fall 2010), 84–86.

8. See Clare Eby’s “Historical Commentary” in Dreiser, *The Genius*, ed. Eby (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2008), p. 763.

9. Eby, p. 764.

10. Eby, p. 762.

11. Eby, p. 763.

12. Loving, *The Last Titan: A Life of Theodore Dreiser* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005), p. 7.

13. *Selected Magazine Articles of Theodore Dreiser: Life and Art in the American 1890s*, ed. Yoshinobu Hakutani (Cranbury: Associated Univ. Presses, 1985), p. 275.

14. *Jennie Gerhardt* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), p. 403.

15. *A Hoosier Holiday* (New York: John Lane Co., 1916), p. 52.

16. *A Traveler at Forty* (Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 244–45.

17. Louis Zanine, *Mechanism and Mysticism: The Influence of Science on the Thought and Work of Theodore Dreiser* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 141.

18. Dreiser, *The “Genius”* (New York: Garden City Pub., 1923), p. 689. Though I have consulted the 1911 holograph edition in the preparation of the manuscript, all quotations—except where indicated—are from the original 1915 published version, as I am interested in showing the importance of Christian Science even in this arguably more mature version of the novel. Citations to this version are indicated parenthetically.

19. Zanine, p. 180.

20. Zanine, p. 181.

21. Lingeman, p. 264.

22. Lingeman, p. 264.

23. A reference to *Plays of the Natural and Supernatural*, a series of “reading plays” composed while *The “Genius”* was in production.

24. *Letters of Theodore Dreiser*, ed. Robert H. Elias (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), I, 335.

25. *Letters of Dreiser*, p. 336.
26. *Letters of Dreiser*, pp. 226–37.
27. Bill Brown, “The Matter of Dreiser’s Modernity,” *The Cambridge Companion to Theodore Dreiser*, ed. Leonard Cassuto and Clare Eby (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), p. 96.
28. See Donald Pizer, “Otto Weininger and the Sexual Dynamics of Theodore Dreiser’s The “Genius,” *Studies in American Naturalism*, 3 (Winter 2008), 120–30.
29. Donald Pizer, *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 151.
30. Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875–1920* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999), p. 26.
31. Satter, p. 26.
32. Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*, together with *The Man Versus the State* (New York: D. Appleton, 1899), p. 137.
33. Satter, p. 27.
34. Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 7.
35. Bederman, p. 7.
36. Satter, p. 27.
37. Bederman, p. 12.
38. George Miller Beard, *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: Putnam’s, 1881), p. vi.
39. The origins of Christian Science in early psychological theories and the movement’s relationship to mind-body healing methods that remain prevalent today is discussed in chapter five of Philip Cushman’s *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1995) and chapter three of Anne Harrington’s *The Cure Within: A History of Mind-Body Medicine* (New York: Norton, 2008).
40. Satter, p. 33.
41. Satter, p. 35.
42. Bederman, p. 13.
43. Satter, p. 35. Except perhaps as economic consumers. As Bowlby argues in *Just Looking*, modern advertising was largely structured around the goal of appealing to female desire, an appeal that was, at times, tacitly sexual.
44. Satter, p. 40.
45. Charlotte Perkins Stetson [Gilman], *Women and Economics* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1898), p. 162.
46. Stetson [Gilman], p. 163.
47. Satter, p. 44.
48. Alison, “Christian Socialism, *Christian Scientist*, 2 (February 1918), 1–3.
49. “Notes Kept by One of Mrs. Eddy’s Early Students from Her Teaching on the Money Thought,” *Christian Scientist*, 1 (September 1916), 5.
50. Alison, p. 2.
51. Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection* (Boston: First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1891), p. 26.
52. “Notes,” p. 5.
53. However, Jean McDonald persuasively critiques the stereotypical assumption that women turned to Christian Science for purely mercenary reasons.
54. Lingeman, p. 31.
55. Beard, p. vi.
56. Lingeman, p. 194.
57. Dreiser, *Dawn* (New York: Liveright, 1931), p. 249.
58. Lingeman, p. 56.
59. Lingeman, p. 246.

60. Lingeman, p. 59. Eby suggests that the 1911 holograph shows us a hero who is more inclined toward “New Women, the self-directed, independent women who emerged on the American scene in the 1880s and 1890s” (766).

61. Lingeman, p. 118.

62. The Angela of the 1911 holograph is an unquestionably more complex and sympathetic character who is, at some points, equally torn between her own desires and the sexual mores of her family and culture.

63. Lingeman, p. 278.

64. Lingeman, p. 546.