Urban Pastoralism in Theodore Dreiser's Works

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Introduction

1. Urban Pastoralism in America

The American writers of the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth century are generally viewed as anti-urban. They often insisted on protecting nature from urbanization. However, as James L. Machor argues in his essay, for American city novelists, "the cities were as important as garden, not merely as a check against pastoral delusion but as a valuable factor in individual and national development" (Machor 229). They were arguing pros and cons of urbanization in their novels. Also, ordinary American people in that period were arguing for and against the issue. While they were fascinated with the newness, gorgeousness, and the potential of the urban, people in cities, at the same time, felt it hard to part from the simplicity and the beauty of the country. This conflict between the city and the country, as a conflict between urban values and the pastoral ideal, is repeatedly suggested in the American city novels. According to Machor, although American writers often depicted "traditional opposition of the city and the country," the American city novelists at the time were interested in the "possibility of a complementary relationship between those two realms and the values they represent" (Machor 229-30). Machor then points out that American city novelists "have not been opposed to cities per se; instead, they have directed their

censure against a particular type of city: the overcrowded, unsanitary, hypercivilized urban monster which crushes bucolic hopes" (Machor 330). Depicting such a type of city, as Machor says, the American city novelists realized that there was a longing for pastoral innocence and peace in an urban society, or "bucolic hopes" in the cities, and they sought the possibility of achieving a harmonious relationship between urban values and the pastoral ideals.

Paul Alpers lists definitions of the pastoral in his essay "What Is Pastoral?" Appreciating Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral*, Alpers writes that the pastoral "is a double longing after innocence and happiness," "is based on the antithesis of Art and Nature," "its fundamental motive is hostility to urban life," and it "is the mode of viewing common experience through the medium of the rural world" (Alpers 437). Thus, the "pastoral" in American urban society can be recognized as an opposition to the "urban." Tracing the history of the usage of "pastoral," Terry Gifford points out that there are "three broadly different ways." According to his discussions, first it is "a historical form with a long tradition which began in poetry, developed into drama and more recently could be recognized in novels." In each of these periods, the literary form can be recognized "as deriving from certain early Greek and Roman poems about life in the country and the life of the shepherd in particular" (Gifford 1). The meanings of "pastoral" here might be a typical meaning of "pastoral" in the history of literature. However, beyond the traditional literary form, Gifford writes, "there is a broader use of 'pastoral' to refer to an area of content," and he argues that this "pastoral" "refers to

any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban" (Gifford 2). On this point, we might say, nature is used in contrast to the urban. We can see the pastoral as an opposition to the urban. Furthermore, Gifford writes about the third usage of "pastoral" that the "simple celebration of nature comes under scrutiny in the third use of 'pastoral'." He explains, "the difference between the literary representation of nature and the material reality would be judged to be intolerable by the criteria of ecological concern." On this point, as he says, "pastoral" is used as "an idealization of the reality of the life in the country" (Gifford 2). In short, the people living in the cities are likely to idealize the life in the country in terms of "bucolic hope" without thinking of the actual country life of poverty. This usage of "pastoral" means a dismissive view of the harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral. As Gifford points out, "American pastoral" may have different traditions from European pastoral, and as for the American pastoral, the idea of "pastoral" cannot exist without the urban. In American city novels, as I explained, the pastoral is recognized as a representation in the opposition to the urban values. In my discussion, therefore, I will use the term "pastoral" according to the second or third usage of Gifford. In addition, Machor considers the interest in the balance of the pastoral and the urban in the American city novels to be a representation of an idea of "urban-pastoral harmony" (Machor 330). This "urban-pastoral harmony" will be the main topic of my discussions. I will use this expression to represent the possibility of achieving a balance of the new

urban values and the traditional pastoral values in the urban society, and also use it to represent the urban people's "bucolic hopes."

Theodore Dreiser, recognized as a foremost American realist or naturalist novelist who focused on depicting the brutal city as it was, was also interested in urban-pastoral harmony, and wrote about the opposition between the city and the country in his books. Of the idea of urban pastoral harmony suggested in American literature, Machor says that there are two different treatments, the internalized version, which "builds an idyllic urban world that serves primarily to affirm the power of human imagination" (340), and the ironic version, which "explores urban pastoralism by testing it against the pulse of reality" and "dramatizes the relation of that ideal to actuality and analyzes the human response to that relationship" (340).[1] The latter may be related to Gifford's third usage of the term "pastoral." When Machor discusses the ironic perspective on urban-pastoral harmony, he takes up the works of Dreiser as an example. However, Dreiser's attitude toward the subject is not always ironic. In his novels, those two realms, the urban and the pastoral, are incarnated in the descriptions of characters, and the characters relationships allegorically represent the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral at the turn of the century. In those descriptions, as I will show especially in Chapter Three and Four by looking at the relationships between the male heroes and women, we can see Dreiser's neutral or equivocal attitude toward the urban-pastoral ideal. In this dissertation, I will explore how the relationship between the country and the city is described in the

works of Dreiser, and trace the transition in Dreiser's own attitude toward urban-pastoral harmony. Although Dreiser is recognized as a great American city novelist who just depicted the brutal reality of the "city," I will demonstrate that there are also pastoral elements in his novels and examine Dreiser's own idea of the urban-pastoral relationship.

To make clear what pastoralism in the urban society is, and how the people in the cities have treated the urban-pastoral ideal, I will first look in this introduction at two most significant discussions about the issue, by Leo Marx and by Raymond Williams, and will examine the literary uses of the urban pastoralism in American literature.

Leo Marx, who discusses "the ambivalent response of certain Americans, especially writers, artists, and intellectuals, to the onset of industrialism"[2] in his influential book *The Machine in the Garden,* points out in his later essay "Pastoralism in America," that the variants of "the complex machine-in-the-landscape image became an omnipresent future of American popular culture" (Marx, "Pastoralism" 37). Marx regards this social change as a "representative event" (Marx, "Pastoralism" 37)[3] in the history of American industrialization, pointing out that the event would later be called "urbanization."[4] Marx divided the ideas of "pastoral" in an urbanized society into two kinds – the "popular and sentimental" pastoralism and the "imaginative and complex" pastoralism (Marx, *MG* 4-5). According to his discussion, the former is a relatively social use of pastoralism which represents a "flight from the city" (Marx,

MG 5) and "pastoral scene" (Marx, *MG* 24), and the latter is a relatively literary use of pastoralism which does "not finally permit us to come away with anything like the simple, affirmative attitude we adopt toward pleasing rural scenery," and brings "irony to bear against the illusion of peace and harmony in a green pasture" (*MG* 25). Marx then concluded that many American writers' "heightened sensitivity to onset of the new industrial power can only be explained by the hold upon their minds of the pastoral ideal, not as conceived by Virgil, but as it had been adapted, since the age of discovery, to New World circumstances" (*MG* 33). Under urbanization, people faced a dichotomy between pastoral innocence and urban authority. Despite understanding the impossibility of achieving a harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral, people in the city still have an ideal image of pastoral happiness as a lifestyle in the cities. In other words, the city dweller's unrealistic belief *is*, we might say, "urban pastoralism," or "urban-pastoral harmony" in American urbanizing society.

Marx further discusses the idea of American urban pastoralism in his later essay. He writes about pastoralism in American literature in its more social and political aspects. He points out that "the new knowledge and power would be used to enhance the well-being of Americans," and that in the dominant culture [5] "the transition to industrialism was enthusiastically endorsed as the stage of history when the direction of change finally, unmistakably acquired the character of continuous, predictable *progress*" (Marx, "Pastoralism" 37). However, he continues, for some intellectual minority, "the same event evoked feelings of dislocation, anxiety,

alienation, and foreboding" (Marx, "Pastoralism" 37), and he regards these feelings as a "dissident mentality" (Marx, "Pastoralism" 37), and emphasized "its striking affinities with the mentality embodied in time-honored literal mode – the pastoral" (Marx, "Pastoralism" 37-38). If American city novelists were attracted to the pastoral ideals, it might be because they noticed the difficulties of having a peaceful or interactive relationship between the pastoral ideal and urban values. Yet, at the same time, the American city novelists found that people continued to wish to have pastoral happiness in their city life. In short, people in cities came to wish to live in a society in which the pastoral dream of harmony is realized, and this is "urban pastoralism" in the works of American city novelists.

As we saw in Gifford's first usage of the term "pastoral," pastoralism originally referred to lives of shepherds who were wishing to disengage themselves from civilization. However, when the rapid changes brought urbanization into the society and made the world modern, "the old pastoral became ludicrously irrelevant" (Marx, "Pastoralism" 52). According to Marx, the pastoral elements in the works of major American novelists in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, such as Melville, Twain, James, Faulkner, and Hemingway, "[do] not contain a single work that champions, or even for that matter lends much credence to, the progressive ideology adhered to by the nation's dominant elites"(Marx, "Pastoralism" 52-53). He argues:

> The characters who most explicitly endorse or embody that regnant viewpoint also tend to be narrow-minded, self-seeking, and, all in all, morally reprehensible. The primary emotional thrust of our major literature is generated by sympathy with protagonists who are at odds with the dominant culture, and by sympathy with their quest, however unsuccessful, for an alternative way of life. (Marx, "Pastoralism" 53)

Marx then points out:

> [The protagonists of such novels] tend to connect the recovery of self with the recovery of the natural, and to represent their deepest longings in numinous visions of landscape. In one way or another, they all lend expression to what may be called the pastoral impulse: a desire, in the face of the growing power and complexity of organized society, to disengage from the dominant culture and to seek out the basis for a simpler, more satisfying mode of life in a realm 'closer', as we say, to nature. (Marx, "Pastoralism" 54)

In short, at the turn of the century, urban pastoralism in American literature meant a simple life in the country which was a desired alternative to the complexity in the city. In depicting the country as a pastoral ideal in contrast to the city, the American novelists try to show their own hopes for urban-pastoral harmony.[6]

If the pastoral elements in the American writings at the turn of the century really do not contain a single work that appreciates the progressive ideology represented by the dominant elites in cities, as Marx points out, the works of Dreiser, including the *Trilogy of Desire* and *The "Genius,"* which show the life of successful financiers in urban society, can be exceptional. This is possibly the reason why Marx never mentions Dreiser's novels when he talks about pastoralism in American literature. However, in his novels, Dreiser also repeatedly writes about the issue of the urban-pastoral relationship. While Dreiser appreciates progressive ideology and potentiality in cities, he depicts the pastoral ideals which the protagonists dream of at the same time. While he describes the successful lives of dominant elites in the city, he portrays the simplicity of the country as an idealized refuge from the city life. That is to say, it is possible to read not only the urban elements but also the pastoral elements in Dreiser's works, and to discuss the issue of urban-pastoral harmony there.

Although both Marx and Machor point out that the contemporary American novelists generally have written about the issue of urban-pastoral harmony from an ironic perspective, there are actually great variations in the discussions of the issue of urban-pastoral ideal, as Raymond Williams points out. In his book, *The Country and the City*, Williams traces the transition of the meanings of the urban-pastoral ideal in English literature, taking up some specific works of English novelists, and claims that the city novelists do not always have a negative point of view of the issue of urban-pastoral relationships, and even when they have an ironic view of urbanization,

the way of opposing the city with the country varies. Williams sums up the general image of the urban-pastoral relationship as the following:

> It is significant, for example, that the common image of the country is now an image of the past, and the common image of the city an image of the future. That leaves, if we isolate them, an undefined present. The pull of the idea of the country is towards old ways, human ways, natural ways. The pull of the idea of the city is towards progress, modernization, development. In what is then a tension, a present experienced as tension, we use the contrast of country and city to ratify an unresolved division and conflict of impulses, which it might be better to face in its own terms. (Williams 297)

This image of the opposition between the urban which represents the future and development, and the pastoral which represents the past and human way, can often be seen in Dreiser's novels too. In *Sister Carrie*, for instance, the idea of country is shown in association with the descriptions of Carrie's childhood in Columbia City, and in *Jennie Gerhardt*, the idea of the country is projected on the nature of Jennie herself. In addition, the opposition of the urban and the pastoral in *Jennie Gerhardt* is shown through the opposing descriptions of the Kane family which represents a progressive sense of value in the city, and of the Gerhardt family which represents a traditional sense of value in the country.

When we think of the ideas of the country and the city, as Williams says, it is useful to ask "with what other ideas, in a more general structure, such ideas (about the country and the city) are associated." Williams explains:

> For example we have to notice the regular sixteenth- and seventeenth-century association of ideas of the city with money and law; the eighteenth-century association with wealth and luxury; the persistent association, reaching a climax in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the mob and the masses; the nineteenth- and twentieth-century association with mobility and isolation. (Williams 290)

Williams then claims that, under those changes of social structure and ideas of city and country, the function of the country in the city novels also has changed; in short, idealizing the country now is not the only way of opposing the city. Williams points out that "in realizing the new fact of the city, we must be careful not to idealize the old and new fact of the country" (Williams 165-66). He regards the rural town in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century as "a changing and struggling rural society" (Williams 197), and claims that a pastoral ideal does not always exist in the country. Moreover, according to his discussions, the city novelists in that period tend to depict not only the city itself but also the reality of the rural town, and in so doing, the novelists suggest the fact that the country cannot always exist as a pastoral ideal for

people in the city. In short, in English literature at the turn of the century, revealing the reality of the changing and struggling country in which people were in conflict between new senses of value, and revealing still surviving conventional social system, became another way of opposing urbanization. On this point, Williams takes up H.G. Wells, and points out that Wells "saw the real order of rural England: whatever the changes of the industrial and urban revolutions, the predominant social system had survived," and says that "real changes were no more than an intrusion or gloss upon it" (Williams 203-31). According to Williams, Wells gathers up and unites what had been very different traditions, the country and the city, by regarding the still surviving rural order as a part of cruel urbanization. Although Williams discusses the issue of the relationship between the country and the city in English literature, not in American literature, the presence of rural order in local communities or suburbs can also be seen in Dreiser's most famous novel, *An American Tragedy*, in which Dreiser reveals not only urbanized nature in the country but also the still surviving traditional social order, the class system, in American rural society.

After Williams gives further discussions about the transition in the ideas of the country and the city in English literature, he concludes that the way of understanding the urban-pastoral relationship gradually changed under urbanization. He then points out that people who admired the city at first came to notice the cruel reality of the city and to oppose it by idealizing the country as a refuge, and then, they gradually learned that the country could not always be a pastoral ideal for them.

The transition in ideas about the urban-pastoral relationship explored by Williams in English literature can be seen in the works of Dreiser too. Furthermore, as a result of the transition, Dreiser shows us the impossibility of the urban-pastoral relationship in his final novel, *The Bulwark*. By describing an independent middle-aged woman and the weakened power of religion in the urban society, Dreiser shows the power of urbanization again. The image of the city which Dreiser describes here, we might say, represents the new structure of the city and shows exactly what Williams calls "the shapes of a different society" (Williams 232). Although he is a well-known American city novelist, Dreiser, throughout his novels, not only describes the reality of the cities as it is, but he also traces the changes of the reactions to the urban pastoral ideal, and shows us various ideas about the issue of urban-pastoral relationships.

2. Urban Pastoralism in Dreiser's Novels

As I mentioned, this study intends to explore how the urban-pastoral relationship and various ideas about the subject are suggested in Theodore Dreiser's novels, and to demonstrate the transition in his own attitude toward the issue. Dreiser, throughout his writing career, wrote the reality of American lives in the great cities such as Chicago and New York. He published eight long novels including one trilogy in his life, and in most of them, the narratives are set in cities in the late nineteenth

century and the early twentieth century. The cities have been described as one of the important factors of his works. As I have explained, generally Dreiser has been recognized as a great American city novelist by critics, and reading his antagonistic point of view about conventional ethical codes and descriptions of the purposelessness of life in a capitalistic society is the mainstream of Dreiser studies.

Today, generally, critics describe Dreiser as a realist or naturalist who depicts life as it is. For example, Donald Pizer writes in his essay, "Dreiser's Critical Reputation," that "Naturalism, which had its origin in the theories and fictions of the late nineteenth-century French novelist Emile Zola, was a Darwinian-based pessimistic determinism in theme and a crude massiveness in technique, and Dreiser was a prime example of both"(Theodore Dreiser's Web Sauce). Charles Child Walcutt, who traces the development of Dreiser's naturalism through his long novels and divides it into four stages, writes that a "mixture of despair and idealism, of wonder and fear, of pity and guilt, of chemistry and intuition has given us the most moving and powerful novels of the naturalistic tradition," and claims that Dreiser's novels reveal "a continuous ethical questioning of tradition, dogma, received morality and social 'justice.'" Walcutt concludes, "[Dreiser's novels] always contain the antithesis of their materialistic premises. Between the poles of this tension is Dreiser's 'naturalism'" (Walcutt 180). In addition, he says, the elements which Dreiser adopted in the writing of his novels are:

> [A] warm, boundless human sympathy; a tremendous vital lust for life with a conviction that man is the end and measure of all things in a world which is nevertheless without purpose or standards; moral, ethical, and religious agnosticism; contact with the scientific thought of the late nineteenth century which emphasized the power and scope of mechanical laws over human desires; belief in a chemical-mechanistic explanation of the human machine; plus a constant yearning for faith" (Walcutt 186).

This human sympathy, purposelessness of life, ethical codes, religion, gender, and human desire for wealth are recognized as naturalistic themes in Dreiser's novels, and critics have focused on how Dreiser shows us those subjects in the problems of the individual and the society. Indeed, we can easily recognize Dreiser's portraiture of the powerlessness of the individual in the city changing to a modern consumerist society. However, when we read Dreiser's works in the context of urbanization of society, it becomes clear that what Dreiser describes in his novels is not only the reality of the city itself and the problems of the relationship between the individual and the society, but also the changing function of the country in the city. Dreiser was interested also in the changing relationship between the country and the city, and depicted the urban-pastoral ideals in his novels.

Thus, in this discussions, I will focus not only on descriptions of the city but also on descriptions of the country which have rarely been focused on in Dreiser

studies, and will explore how Dreiser wrote about urban pastoralism in his novels. To demonstrate the transition in Dreiser's ideas about the urban-pastoral relationships, I will take up all of Dreiser's long novels except the third volume of the trilogy,[7] and examine how the issue of urban-pastoral relationship is suggested in each book.

In chapter Ⅰ and Ⅱ, I will take up *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt*, two novels in which Dreiser describes city life from the perspective of a young country girl who comes to the city to find a work. I will first point out that there are some descriptions of the country in *Sister Carrie* although this book is recognized as a representative city novel of Dreiser's. I then consider the book as an approach to Dreiser's pastoralism. I will then read the figure of idealized country in *Jennie Gerhardt.* Here, the image of the pastoral is represented in the description of Jennie as an idealized refuge for city people. I will point out Dreiser's relatively affirmative ideas about urban-pastoral harmony by carefully examining how Jennie is described in the context of urban society. The *Trilogy of Desire,* especially the first and the second volumes, and *The "Genius,"* depict the gigantic urban society from the viewpoint of a natural financial hero. In those books, the firm influence of urbanization is shown. Then in chapter Ⅲ, I will take up the *Trilogy of Desire* and see how Dreiser suggests urban pastoralism from the viewpoint of a successful businessman in the city. I will then take up *The "Genius"* in chapter Ⅳ, and examine how urban pastoralism is suggested in this book, this time in connection with the world of art. Furthermore, in those novels, the issue of the relationship between the urban and the pastoral is

suggested in association with the relationship between the hero and women. Through the various descriptions of the hero's affairs with women, Dreiser also writes about how the pastoral ideal is treated by the people in the city. In the conclusions of those three novels, while Dreiser shows us the influence of urbanization, he also emphasizes the influence of the pastoral ideal on the people in the urban society. In those novels, we can see his skeptical or equivocal attitude toward urban-pastoral harmony. Unlike his earlier four novels, in *An American Tragedy* Dreiser sets the scene of the main event not in the city but in the rural town.[8] In chapter Ⅴ, I will focus on the description of nature, especially of lakes in *An American Tragedy*, and examine how Dreiser reacts to the changing value of nature under urbanization. He turns his attention away from the city toward nature in the country, and describes the two-sidedness of the rural town: the changing value of nature, and still surviving traditional order there. He shows the fact that the rural world cannot always be idealized, and shows his negative point of view of urban-pastoral harmony. His skeptical viewpoint of the pastoral ideal in the country and his rejection of the possibility of a harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral become clear in his final work, *The Bulwark*. In Chapter Ⅵ, I will explore how Dreiser describes the urban-pastoral ideal in the context of religion in *The Bulwark*, and read this book as the conclusion of Dreiser's urban pastoralism. Although Dreiser often suggested the limitations of urbanization in his earlier novels, in this novel, he clearly shows us the strong power of urbanization, and shows his negative view of a complementary relationship between the urban and the pastoral. He

represents the power of urbanization through the descriptions of an independent middle-aged woman and the religious protagonist's failure to rediscover his self in nature. Through this reading, I will argue that Dreiser shows the reality of the society under urbanization as it is in his final work. In short, we might say, this novel is a work which shows us "Dreiserian naturalism."

By and large, in reading most of Dreiser's long novels in terms of urban pastoralism, my discussion will lead to two main conclusions. One is that, although Dreiser is recognized as a typical American city novelist, he is actually interested not only in the city but also in the country, and it is possible to read the pastoral elements in Dreiser's novels when we focus on how the image of the country is presented in his narratives. Another is that when we trace descriptions of the urban-pastoral relationship in his novels, we can see the transition in Dreiser's various viewpoints about urban-pastoral harmony. While Dreiser generally had affirmative and equivocal ideas about the issue of urban-pastoral relationship in his early years, in his last years, he states the firm influence of urbanization and his negative ideas about the subject. By reading Dreiser's works in the context of the urban-pastoral relationship, we can finally notice that there were various responses to the issue in American cities at the turn of the century.

Notes

[1] In his essay, Machor cites the works of Whitman and Hawthorne as examples of each form, the internalized version and ironic version. He points out that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the ironic perspective had become dominant among the major American novelists who addressed the subject. (Machor 330)

[2] Marx explains his earlier treatment of the pastoralism in *The Machine in the Garden* like this in his later essay titled "Pastoralism in America" (36-7) .

[3] MG means Machine in the Garden, and "pastoralism" means "Pastoralism in America."

[4] According to Gerber, "between 1870 and 1900s, the United States transformed itself from an agricultural nation, a nation of farmers, merchants, and artisans, into the world's foremost industrial power, producing more than one-third of the world's manufactured goods. Then agricultural workers had dropped from a half to less than a third" (Gerber 496). Gerber says that, in this period, "the electric age" had begun. In my discussion, I will use the term "urbanization" for this social change of American society at the turn of the century.

[5] Marx uses "dominant" not for the culture accepted by a majority of the people but for the culture accepted by the most influential social groups in the city such as enterprisers, artists, writers, and intellectuals.

[6] A description of the simplicity in the life close to nature is an indication of the traditional sense of value or conventional way of life. I will use these three expressions, "pastoralism," "traditional sense of value," and "conventional" interchangeably to explain the pastoral.

[7] Because Dreiser took more than thirty years to complete the *Trilogy of Desire*, the last volume, *The Stoic* tends to be understood in a different way from the first and the second volumes. It might be difficult to discuss urban-pastoral harmony in this novel

the same context with the two other volumes, so that I will avoid giving a further discussion of *The Stoic* in thinking of Dreiser's urban pastoralism in this dissertation.

[8] In *An American Tragedy*, Lycurgus, a suburb of New York, appears as a place opposed to the city.

Chapter Ⅰ *Sister Carrie*:

A Shadow of the Country in the City

1. Introduction

Although *Sister Carrie*, Theodore Dreiser's first novel, has been recognized as one of the most important American "city novels," focusing only on the city scenes and describing the city life as it is, I will argue here that in this novel, as in Dreiser's other novels, we can see elements of the pastoral, and that the issue of "urban-pastoral harmony" is explored by Dreiser. In this chapter, then, I will examine how the presence of the country is described in *Sister Carrie*, and examine how the issue of urban-pastoral harmony is suggested through the description of Carrie's life. By reading *Sister Carrie* focusing on the description of the pastoral, we will be able to understand this famous city novel as an approach to Dreiser's pastoralism.

Sister Carrie has been understood as a representative book of American city novels, and the description of the city itself has been focused upon when critics discuss the main themes of this novel. For example, taking Dreiser together with Henry James and William Dean Howell as important American city novelists, James Machor says that "despite their willingness to depict the callousness, duplicity and artificiality of cities, all three incorporated in their fictions an appreciation of the rich diversity and excitement of the urban scene as an essential component of American

experience"(Machor 229), and points out that for American romantics, particularly in the nineteenth century, the city was often treated as a "valuable factor for individual and national development under capitalism"(Machor 229). Machor then picks up Dreiser's first novel, *Sister Carrie*, as a representative example of the American "city novel." Blanch H. Gelfant, who explains in her book *The American City Novel* that the American city novelists wrote of the city not only as a place but also as a social structure premised on a unique lifestyle, also takes *Sister Carrie* as the foremost example of the city novel. Furthermore, Laurence E. Hussman, Jr, pointing out that "Carrie is clearly a projection of the novelist's own dreams and desires" on the basis of the well-known fact that the immediate inspiration for the young girl's characterization was one of Dreiser's real-life sisters who had run off with one of her suitors, argues that the city in *Sister Carrie* is described as "a place of material wonders and endless pleasure" (Hussman 22). In addition, Donald Pizer also points out in his book *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser* that Carrie's life in the cities is described as a representation of the purposelessness of life in the urban society.

Critics have discussed the purposelessness of life in the city, or meaninglessness of the moral rules as major issues of *Sister Carrie*. For instance, Charles Child Walcutt, who traces the development of Dreiser's naturalism through his novels and divides it into four stages, locates *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser's second novel, in the first stage of Dreiser's development and says:

> In the first stage Dreiser was expounding his conviction of the essential purposelessness of life and attacking the conventional ethical codes which to him seemed to hold men to standards of conduct that had no rational basis in fact. (Walcutt 187; underline added)

Walcutt also points out that Dreiser's naturalistic works "reveal a continuous ethical questioning of tradition, dogma, received morality, and social 'justice'" which "always contain the antithesis of their materialistic premises," and suggests the "ambiguousness and oppositeness in the society itself"(Walcutt 181-187). Walcutt mostly discusses Dreiser's naturalism in connection with the problem of the individual and society. Thus, critics have concluded that the purposelessness of life and the meaninglessness of the ethical code in urban society are what Dreiser reveals in *Sister Carrie*. They have read the meaninglessness of human will through the inverse relationship between Carrie and Hurstwood, and have read the emergence of consumer society and the new value of consumption through the characters' desire for wealth. They have then explored Dreiser's progressive ideas about women, by discussing the description of Carrie's life, in which she takes advantage of the fondness for her of two men and reaches the top of the theater world in New York as an actress. Thus, "the figure of coercive cityscape," "the purposelessness of life," and "the meaninglessness of the ethical code" are issues that have been identified as the main themes of *Sister Carrie*.

However, what Dreiser's cities show in *Sister Carrie* is not only an unstable

individual under capitalism but also the unstable relationship between the city and the country in the process of urbanization. In *Sister Carrie*, as well as in his other novels, I would argue, the meanings of the country under urbanization are juxtaposed with the description of a coercive city, and at the same time, the desire of urban dwellers for a pastoral ideal is shown. Although Dreiser is known as a representative of American city novelists, when we carefully look at the description of the country in his novels, it becomes clear that most of Dreiser's novels contain the issue of urban-pastoral relationship, and therefore, we can argue that Dreiser's novels, including *Sister Carrie*, are not only city novels, but also pastoral novels.

The conflict between country and city becomes an important issue for people who live in the urbanized society, and city dwellers come to dream of the complementary relationship of those two realms. This ideal relationship between urban and pastoral is called "the urban-pastoral ideal" in Williams's words, or "urban-pastoral harmony" in Machor's words, and in the late nineteen century, it came to be discussed by American city novelists too. According to Raymond Williams's discussion in his influential book *The Country and the City*, as I mentioned in the introduction, the city is a place of "noise, worldliness and ambitions," and the country is a place of "ignorance and limitation" (Williams 1). American city novelists generally have depicted two spaces, the city and the country, as opposing factors in the urban society and written about how the people in the cities dealt with the urban-pastoral issues. Of the pastoralism in American literature at the turn of the

century, John Humma writes:

> From Theocritus through D.H. Lawrence, the pastoral poem and novel offer a nature ethic implicit within which are several defining conflicts or points of tension, most obviously, an urban-pastoral tension featuring on a personal level deeper conflicts, or contrasts between simplicity and innocence on the one hand and sophistication and knowledge on the other. Curiously, American literature bows to English literature in the representation of the pastoral. (Humma 157)

Humma then points out that the works of Cooper, Melville, and Hemingway, which are recognized as pastoral novels in Leo Marx's discussion, are "pastoral-like" novels which are not "really complete" and do not "satisfy the dimensions of the pastoral novel" (157).

On the other hand, Humma takes Dreiser and says:

> But oddly, America's foremost novelist of the city – the author of *Sister Carrie*, America's foremost novel of the city – perhaps comes closest in *Jennie Gerhardt* to writing America's true pastoral novel. (Humma 157)

Indeed, in *Jennie Gerhardt*, the heroine, Jennie, is described as a representation of the

pastoral ideal, and in Dreiser's later novels also the issue of urban-pastoral harmony is often presented through the human relationship among the characters and the relationship between the protagonists and some external factors in urban society. However, in the above sentence, Humma does not mention the pastoralism in *Sister Carrie*. He takes *Sister Carrie* simply as an example of Dreiser's famous city novel. This suggests that elements of the pastoral novel can be seen only in Dreiser's novels after *Jennie Gerhardt*, and that it is difficult to see elements of the pastoral novel in *Sister Carrie*, a representative novel of the city novelist. Indeed, a line in the opening paragraph of the novel, "the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken"(1), emphasizes a separation from the country and emphasizes the power of the city, and it allows readers to understand this novel as a city novel which reveals the cruel reality of the urban society. However, as I will demonstrate, if we look at the description of the relationship between Carrie and her hometown in this book, we can also read a pastoral ideal in it.

It is true that *Sister Carrie* is written in settings similar to those of *Jennie Gerhardt*, so that if Jennie represents the pastoral ideal, Carrie might have the elements of the pastoral in her nature too. Both Carrie and Jennie are pretty young women of the 1880s who come to the city from the country dreaming of new lives. Both Carrie and Jennie progress in knowledge and sophistication under the tutelage of the men in their lives. Both women, furthermore, ultimately fail to achieve fulfillment, and each finally puzzles about her experiences. In spite of the similarities, however, Carrie is different

from Jennie in some ways. Whereas Jennie willingly dedicates herself to her lover throughout her life and wants to live in nature, Carrie is guided strongly by her self-interest and wants to live in cities. While Jennie represents a pastoral ideal in the novel, Carrie seems to represent "urbanization" of the society. However, there are elements of pastoral in *Sister Carrie* too. In addition, when we carefully examine the instability of Carrie's life, the unstable relationship between urban and pastoral also can be seen in this novel. That is to say, although he is famous as an American city novelist, Dreiser noticed that the urban society at the time was full of people's hopes to have both urban values and the pastoral ideal in their lives, and he was interested in describing it in his novels. He, in short, wanted to show us that he was interested in and hoped for urban-pastoral harmony, and tried to write about the possibility or impossibility of such ideals about the urban and the pastoral. In so thinking, it would be possible to understand *Sister Carrie* as an introduction to Dreiser's pastoralism. In the following discussion, then, I will first explain how there is still a shadow of the country behind Carrie, and will explore how the urban-pastoral relationship is described through the description of unstable Carrie in *Sister Carrie*. Then we will be able to see that, although she is seemingly displayed as a progressive urbanized woman, Carrie still has pastoral elements in her nature, and those are embodied by Jennie, who is described as an ideal woman, in *Jennie Gerhardt*. Furthermore, by looking at the unstable situation of Carrie in the city, we will be able to see the social conflict between the pastoral ideal and the urban sense of value in the urban society.

2. The Garden in the Machines

2.1. The Image of the Country behind Carrie

Phillip Fisher takes up the following description of Chicago in *Sister Carrie* and points out that the descriptions of the city and the situation of the people "in a middle stage" could stand as "descriptions of America itself in 1890" (Fisher 129-30):

> In 1889 Chicago had peculiar qualifications for growth which made such adventuresome pilgrimages even on the part of young girls plausible. Its many and glowing commercial opportunities gave it widespread fame, which made of it a giant magnet drawing to itself, from all quarters, the hopeful and the hopeless – those who had their fortune yet to make and those whose fortunes and affairs had reached a disastrous climax elsewhere. It was a city of over 500,000, with the ambition, the daring, the activity of a metropolis of a million. Its streets and houses were already scattered over an area of seventy-five square miles. Its population was not so much thriving upon established commerce as upon the industries which prepared for the arrival of others. The sound of the hammer engaged upon the erection of new structures was everywhere heard. Great industries were moving in. […] Narrow board walks extended out, passing here a house, and there a store, at

far intervals eventually ending on the open prairie. (11-12)

After the description of the great city, Chicago, Dreiser adds a sentence:

Into this important commercial region the timid Carrie went. (12)

Although critics argue that *Sister Carri*e mainly focuses on the city scenes, Dreiser already suggests the presence of the country in the city at the beginning of the story by showing the unreliable figure of a "timid" (12) country girl, Carrie, in the "important commercial region" (12) of the big city, Chicago.

The image of a "timid" country girl from Columbia City, Carrie, in a gigantic city, Chicago, suggests the garden in the machine image. In this novel, the presence of the country in the city is suggested in the descriptions of Carrie in the city throughout the story. In addition, when Carrie runs away from her sister's house to live with Drouet, Dreiser writes about the people in the city: "Our civilization is still in a middle stage, scarcely beast, in that it is no longer wholly guided by instinct; scarcely human, in that it is not yet wholly guided by reason" (56). Into such urbanizing American society, "timid" Carrie enters, and at the same time, in the famous sentence of the opening paragraph, "the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken," Carrie is separated from the country, and is immersed in the world of the city, Chicago. However, I would argue that it is too hasty to assume that

the threads which bound Carrie and the image of the country are really broken. In fact, throughout the story, there are references to Columbia City, [1] and if we carefully look at these, we can see the image of the country is not completely eliminated from the story. For instance, in an early scene in which the train Carrie boards is about to arrive at Chicago, Dreiser describes Carrie:

> The fact that she was alone, away from home, rushing into a great sea of life and endeavour, began to tell. She could not help but feel a little choked for breath – a little sick as her heart beat so fast. She half closed her eyes and tried to think it was nothing, that Columbia City was only a little way off.
>
> "Chicago! Chicago!" called the brakeman, slamming open the door. (7)

Here, through the description of Carrie, who is about to enter the city, the image of the country, Columbia City, is presented in opposition to the image of the city, Chicago. Despite the narrator's claim that "the threads" are "broken" at the beginning, in the rest of the narrative he mentions "Columbia City" nine times, and in each case the image of the country is shown in contrast to the city through the description of Carrie. In *Sister Carrie*, as in Dreiser's other novels, the country is described as a place which indicates not the wilderness but an ideal pastoral realm which is related to the image of the beauty of nature, farming, or self-sufficient living. Therefore, examining the nine

scenes in which Columbia City is referred to, I will consider how the image of the country in the city is described through the description of Carrie.

First of all, Carrie is overwhelmed by the gigantic city when she enters the business district to look for a job:

> 1) She should have understood the meaning of a little stone-cutter's yard at Columbia City, […] but when the yards of some huge stone corporation came into view, filled with spur tracks and flat cars, transpierced by docks from the river and traversed over-head by immense trundling cranes of wood and steel, it lost all significance in her little world. (12; underlines added)

Here Dreiser shows the relationship between Carrie and Columbia City by using the word "little," and then shows Columbia City in contrast to the "huge" city. By using antonyms, "little" and "huge," he shows the opposition between the country and the city, and suggests a supposed superiority of the city over the country. This can be seen in the description of Carrie's first day at work, too:

> 2) On Monday she arose early and prepared to go to work. She dressed herself in a worn shirt-waist of dotted blue percale, a skirt of light-brown serge rather faded, and a small straw hat which she had worn all summer at Columbia City. Her shoes were old, and her necktie was in that crumpled, flattened state

which time and much wearing impart. (25; underlines added)

Columbia City, which is mentioned in the description of Carrie, is equated with the "old" in contrast to the new image of the city. In addition, there is a scene in which Carrie is working surrounded by the machines in a factory and wondering about the outside world:

> 3) All during the long afternoon she thought of the city outside and its imposing show, crowds, and fine buildings. Columbia City and the better side of her home life came back. (31; underline added)

By describing Carrie surrounded by machines in the factory and thinking about her home life here, Dreiser suggests the image of "the country in the city," or "the garden in the machine," and he shows us the opposing relationship between the two realms. The description of the country girl, Carrie, wondering about the urban life is also presented in the scene at the foot of the stairs of Minnie's apartment.

> 4) [Carrie] decided to go down and stand in the door at the foot of the stairs. […] The life of streets continued for a long time to interest Carrie. […] She would have a far-off thought of Columbia City now and then […]. (39; underline added)

Thus, in spite of the connection between Carrie and the country being severed by Dreiser, the shadow of the country remains. By describing Carrie as an embodiment of the country and as powerless in the city, Dreiser writes of the powerlessness of the country under urbanization.

However, Carrie's thought of Columbia City begins changing when unemployed Carrie meets again with Drouet, her first lover, in Chicago and receives twenty dollars from him. When she comes back to Minnie's house, she talks with Minnie about what she should do if she does not find a job:

> 5) "If I don't get something pretty soon, I think I'll go home." Minnie saw her chance. "Sven thinks it might be best for the winter, anyhow." […] [Carrie] was glad she had Drouet's money. "Yes," she said after a few moments, "I thought of doing that." She did not explain that the thought, however, had aroused all the antagonism of her nature. Columbia City, what was there for her? She knew its dull, little round by heart. Here was the great, mysterious city which was still a magnet for her. (50; underlines added)

Carrie begins to feel the antagonism towards her rural hometown here. In addition, the next day, when she meets with Drouet, she says to him, for the sake of appearance, that she will return him the money and will go home, but Drouet replies:

6) “What can you do back at Columbia City?” he went on, rousing by the words in Carrie’s mind a picture of the dull world she had left. “There isn’t anything down there. Chicago’s the place.’’(52-3)

Here, the rural hometown is depicted as valueless for Carrie in the city.

The mention of the relationship between Carrie and her hometown can be seen after Carrie starts living with Drouet in an apartment at Ogden Place, Chicago. One day she drives out with her neighbor, Mrs. Hale, to North Shore Drive, an upper-class residential area. After coming back to her room, she wonders about her life:

7) She longed and longed and longed. It was now for the old cottage room in Columbia City, now the mansion upon the Shore Drive, now the fine dress of some lady, now the elegance of some scene. (87; underlines added)

Later, after Carrie has a quarrel with Drouet, because a secret meeting with Hurstwood is discovered, and Drouet leaves her, she again thinks about Colombia City as a lost place:

8) In this situation her thoughts went out to her sister in Van Buren Street, whom she had not seen since the night of her flight, and to her home at

> Colombia City, which seemed now a part of something that could not be again. She looked for no refuge in that direction. (underline added 181)

Columbia City is here shown as a place where Carrie "could not be again." It suggests that the country is now not an appropriate place for increasingly urbanized Carrie. This shows us the difficulties of the complex relationship between the urban sense of value and the pastoral sense of value. The impossibility of urban-pastoral harmony which we often see in Dreiser's other works can already be seen here in the description of Carrie.

However, the shadow of Columbia City behind Carrie appears again at the end of the story. When she becomes successful as a theatrical actress, she has an opportunity to live free in a room of one of the newest and most imposing hotels on New York's Broadway. After she moves to the room, letters from men are handed Carrie by the doorman every day:

> 9) *Mash notes* were old affairs in their mildest form. She remembered having received her first one far back in Columbia City. […] Now, however, they came thick and fast […]. She had not had fame or money before. Now they had come. She had not had adulation and affectionate propositions before. Now they had come. Wherefore? She smiled to think that men should suddenly find her so much more attractive. In the least way it incited her to coolness and indifference. (333; underline added)

In a fine room of the hotel in the city, Carrie remembers Columbia City and feels nostalgia, and she notices that she is not such a “pure” and “unsophisticated” woman now. In short, Carrie feels nostalgia here because she finds out that she cannot have the things Columbia City represents in the urban society.

While the threads which bound Carrie with the country seem to be broken by Dreiser in the opening paragraph, in fact, Columbia City repeatedly appears in Carrie’s mind throughout the novel, and it reminds us of Carrie’s connection to the country. The image of the country, as we have seen, is first identified with powerlessness, then with worthlessness in the urban society; yet at the novel’s conclusion, the value of the unsophisticated country is also shown. In the ninth description of Columbia City, for instance, the country shows Carrie, who used to be a poor, unsophisticated, and emotional girl, what she has lost in becoming urbanized. Columbia City here represents what the city does not have. Carrie wandering alone in a room of a fine hotel in the city indicates not only the purposelessness of human life and unlimited human desire in the urban society, but also the desire of people in the city for what they may have lost, in other words, their desire for a pastoral ideal.

2.2 The Process of Urbanization in Carrie

While Dreiser shows “the garden in the machine,” or “the country in the city”

image in the descriptions of Carrie, he, at the same time, shows the image of urbanization of the country in the description of Carrie being urbanized in the city. I would like to see how the country girl goes into the "important commercial region" in the city, and is urbanized there. Of the "commercial region" in the 1880s, Fisher writes that it is "the metonymy for our total system of desires," and says that "within the city all things become commodities – all objects, all other persons even shade, company, learning, or religion." He then remarks of the relationship between the people in the city and commodities, which "has shifted from that of caring for things that one has to buying things one hasn't" (Fisher 133). This phenomenon, "all things become commodities," can be seen in *Sister Carrie*, too, in the description of the process of urbanization of Carrie in the "commercial region."

The process of urbanization of Carrie is carried out by male city dwellers in this novel, and this means that Carrie never becomes independent throughout the story. However, in Dreiser studies, generally the idea of Carrie's being a woman in love or a woman who embodies the pastoral ideal has been recognized as inappropriate to the unconventional narrative of *Sister Carrie*. Many have argued that Carrie's success is brought by self-interest, and her insatiable desire for having something good. The pastoral ideal seems to have nothing to do with Carrie's success. Indeed, Carrie, in the conclusion of the novel, is not interested in any letters from men, nor is she described as a woman truly in love throughout the novel. This allows us to understand Carrie as an independent city woman. It would seem difficult to see the pastoral ideal in the

description of Carrie. However, we could argue that her success is guided by possessive city men if we look at her success in association with her affairs with men. Firstly, one who plays a leading part in carrying forward the process of Carrie's urbanization is a city dweller, Drouet. As Barbara Hochman says, the relationship between Drouet and Carrie is generally recognized as a relation of "support and independence" (Hochman 50-51). For example, Hochman takes up a scene in which Carrie plays Laura in the play of *Under the Gaslight*, entertainment at the Elks' lodge which Drouet belongs to. In the scene of *Under the Gaslight*, Drouet encourages Carrie who is frightened on the stage at first, and his presence makes the situation better for Carrie. Hochman argues that Drouet's role in this scene is "not only in helping Carrie to realize her dramatic potential, but also in enabling her to recognize her achievement," and says that Drouet supports Carrie here to be independent. (Hochman 48) Yet, when we read this novel in the context of urbanization of American society at the turn of the century in which "all things become commodities" (Fisher 133), it can be said that Drouet's role in the scene of *Under the Gaslight* is helping Carrie to become a commodity as an actress. If Carrie symbolizes the country, commercialization of Carrie can be seen as a representation of the possibility of commercialization of the pastoral realm. The relationship between Drouet and Carrie can be seen not only as a relation of "support and independence" but also as a relation of "a producer and a product." Accordingly, in this novel, the process of the commercialization of the country in the city can be seen in the transformation of

Carrie's career in the urban society.

This becomes clear when we see the scene in which Carrie meets Drouet again in the downtown of Chicago. Soon after her arrival in Chicago, Carrie is asked to earn money by her sister, Minnie, and Minnie's husband, and forced to look for a job. Although she has got a job at a shoe factory, she soon loses it because of her illness. She is again put into the commercial district of the city as a valueless girl, but at this time, she meets again with Drouet in the town. When Drouet learns of the situation, he takes Carrie to a fine traditional restaurant and gives her a luxurious meal. Having the fine dinner, he thinks about Carrie: she "was really pretty. Even then, in her commonplace garb, her figure was evidently not bad, and her eyes were large and gentle" (46). He gives her twenty dollars when he parts from her and asks her to buy some new clothes. Drouet here finds something valuable in Carrie and tries to construct her according to his taste with the money as one who can circulate in the world of the city. In short, Drouet unconsciously produces Carrie with his money here.

Drouet's occupation itself also represents the distribution of the commodities under urbanization. Drouet is "a type of the travelling canvasser for a manufacturing house – a class which at that time was first being dubbed by the slang of the day 'drummer'" (3). The traveling salesmen at that time traveled to remote places using a developed network of railroads, and toured from farmhouse to farmhouse carrying books or small items. They derived from the mass consumption culture and were characteristic of the development of the manufacturing industry in American urban

society. In addition, according to Orihara's explanations, the drummer at that time played a role as a contact between the city and the country. If we think of Carrie as a product, it can be said that she is carried into the city from the country by Drouet. The following is a scene in which Carrie takes a walk in the city with Drouet:

> A dainty, self-conscious swaying of the hips by a woman was to him as alluring as the glint of rare wine to a toper.
>
> "Did you see that woman who went by just now?" he said to Carrie on the first day they took a walk together. "Fine stepper wasn't she?"
>
> Carrie looked, and observed the grace commended. "Yes, she is," she returned, cheerfully, a little suggestion of possible defect in herself awakening in her mind. If that was so fine, she must look at it more closely. Instinctively, she felt a desire to imitate it. (76)

Despite being with Carrie, Drouet is interested in other women and describes their sophisticated behavior, referring to the value of wine, one of the luxury commodities at that time, "as the glint of rare wine to a toper." This means that Drouet thinks of women as one of the luxurious products which appear in the urbanized world. Drouet's attitude towards women here reminds us of Thorstein Veblen's "conspicuous consumption." Of the consumer sentiment in a capitalistic society, Veblen argues that, in the industrial communities at the late nineteenth century, the mechanical

contrivances available for the comfort and convenience of everyday life were highly developed, so that people tended to be fascinated by showing their possession of wealth, and how to spend their leisure time became one of the big issues for them (Veblen 1-51, 155-200). Thinking of this discussion, it can be said that, in the capitalistic society, women can be an object which indicates the possession of wealth for a young male city dweller such as Drouet. Owing to Drouet's instructions, Carrie comes to be closer to the luxurious type of woman who fits the urban society. Dreiser describes Carrie's earnest longing as a "desire to imitate," and indeed, Carrie becomes precisely a part of the urban society by imitating the luxuriousness of the city.[2] After a while, Carrie gets used to the city life and becomes "a young woman who [is] much more than the Carrie to whom Drouet [first spoke]" (79). Thus, Carrie learns how to adjust herself to the new way of urban life through Drouet, and is circulated in the urban society by a salesman, Drouet. This description of the relationship between Drouet and Carrie shows a supposed supremacy of the city over the country and represents the urbanization of the country.

Although Carrie is urbanized by the city man, she still shows the image of the pastoral, and it attracts male city dwellers. It is clear in the scene where Hurstwood, a friend of Drouet's, visits their apartment and Carrie falls in love with him. Hurstwood wants to have Carrie and almost forcibly takes her to New York with him. The reason why Hurstwood is strongly attracted by Carrie is that she has the things which Hurstwood does not have, "the bloom and unsophistication" (79). He finds "the air of

the village, the light of the county" in Carrie, and for Hurstwood, these things seem to be an ideal of the past. He then thinks of the time with Carrie at Jefferson Park as a refuge from the burden of the urban life. Hurstwood's desire here -- the desire to escape from his tiring daily life in the world -- we might say, represents the city dweller's desire for the country life. Carrie shows Hurstwood the pastoral ideal. In *Sister Carrie* too, Dreiser tries to depict the pastoral ideal through the description of his woman character as he does in his second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt*.

Thus, in this novel, the process of urbanization and commercialization of Carrie -- produced by Drouet first, then, passed to a wealthier man, Hurstwood, and finally, put into the great commercial city of New York where Carrie becomes a valuable thing in the commercial district -- symbolically suggests the commercialization of the country in the cities, and at the same time, it shows that Carrie still has the image of the pastoral which attracts men in the cities.

3. Instability of the Urbanizing Society in *Sister Carrie*

As we have seen, Dreiser shows in *Sister Carrie*, as in other novels, urbanization and commercialization of the country through descriptions of the process of a country girl's material achievement. However, Dreiser shows not only the urbanization of the country in this novel, but he also shows the instability of the people in the urbanized society who are caught in a dilemma between the urban and the

pastoral. This is clearly indicated by the ambiguous figure of Carrie in the conclusion of the novel:

> Oh, Carrie, Carrie! Oh, blind strivings of the human heart! Onward, onward, it saith, and where beauty leads, there it follows. Whether it be the tinkle of a lone sheep bell o'er some quiet landscape, or the glimmer of beauty in sylvan places, or the show of soul in some passing eye, the heart knows and makes answer, following. […] In your rocking-chair, by your window dreaming, shall you long, alone. In your rocking chair, by your window, shall you dream such happiness as you may never feel. (underline added 369)

The expressions, "the tinkle of a long sheep bell," and "the glimmer of beauty in sylvan places" remind us of Carrie's connection to the country. Here, clearly, Carrie is described in connection with the image of the pastoral and is put in an unstable situation. The famous last two sentences of this book, "In your rocking-chair, by your window dreaming, shall you long, alone. In your rocking chair, by your window, shall you dream such happiness as you may never feel" have been discussed by many critics, and the two terms, "rocking chair" and "window," are generally recognized as representations of the border between insider and outsider in the capitalistic urban world. Critics argue that this betweenness in the conclusion represents the purposelessness of life, and that this final scene makes *Sister Carrie* one of the most

representative books of American city novels. However, when we think of the betweenness of Carrie in this story in association with the process of Carrie's material success, and with her pastoral image in the conclusion, it can be said that the unstable relationship between urban and pastoral, which is repeatedly shown in Dreiser's later works, is described in *Sister Carrie* too. Dreiser, in short, shows the instability of the urban-pastoral relationship by depicting the instability of the urbanization of a country girl, Carrie.

Thinking of the betweenness of Carrie, rocking chairs play an important role of showing the unstable Carrie's situation between the urban and the pastoral. Following Siegfried Giedion's description of the rocking chair image -- "an increasingly popular American object that domesticated and routinized the steady motion of work, turning it into lulling relaxation" (quoted in Fisher 154) -- and has analyzed the popularity of rocking chairs in late nineteenth century America:

> The rocking chair permits one to rest and move at the same time, cancelling the effects of motion by allowing it to recur in the same fixed spot. The rocking chair on a porch – that quintessential American image – permits the rocker to be in motion and yet never to leave the same place, to participate in street life without leaving family safety, to enter the world and yet to be protected from it by the porch rail and the inevitable picket fence at the sidewalk. (Fisher 154)

Fisher then explains that rocking chairs in the late nineteenth century became especially popular among the people in the *middle* classes. Thinking of the state of the middle classes in the society in connection with the motion of locking chairs; back and forth yet goes nowhere, rocking chairs can be seen as a symbol for the "in-betweenness"(Fisher 154) of the people in the cities. Although Fisher points out that, in *Sister Carrie*, the motion of the rocking chair shows images of the "vertical motions of rising and falling" (Fisher 155), the "in-betweenness" image of the rocking chair is used effectively also to show the heroine's instability. The instability, moreover, shows the situation of betweenness of the people who are in a dilemma between a new sense of value in the city and a pastoral sense of value in the country. By using the symbol of rocking chairs, Dreiser describes the unstable urban-pastoral relationship in this novel.

Carrie tends to rock the chairs when she stands at the turning point of life. For example, first of all, as soon as she arrives at her sister's flat in West Van Buren Street, Carrie draws "the one small rocking chair up to the open window, and sat looking out upon the night and streets in silent wonder"(11) dreaming of the new urban world outside. Then, a few days later, Carrie is taken into the world of the city by Drouet. After she starts her new life in an apartment house in Ogden Place, Carrie often rocks and wonders in a room which has several rocking chairs. The first time Carrie rocks and thinks in this room is when she comes back from a drive with Mrs. Hale, a resident

of the apartment house. Thinking of the gorgeous houses in North Shore Drive she has just seen, in a rocking chair, she comes to wonder "what after all [is] Drouet?"(87), and thinks:

> What was she? At her window, she thought it over, rocking to and fro, and gazing out across the lamp-lit park toward the lamp-lit houses on Warren and Ashland avenues. (87)

The description of Carrie here is similar to the description of the Carrie who rocks and thinks on a small rocking chair in a flat in Van Buren Street, but this time, the one who takes her to the outside world from the Ogden Place apartment house is Hurstwood, not Drouet. Although she is confused by his sudden visit to her apartment house, she finally goes out with him willingly. Then Carrie realizes Hurstwood's love for her, and feels the strangeness of her situation:

> How was it that, in so little a while, the narrow life of the country had fallen from her as a garment, and the city, with all its mystery, taken its place? Here was this greatest mystery, the man of money and affairs sitting beside her, appealing to her. (96)

The image of country in Carrie is described in contrast to the image of city in

Hurstwood, and through the relationship between Carrie and Hurstwood, the urbanization of the country can be seen here again. The description of rocking chairs which represent the betweenness of Carrie is shown in association with the process of urbanization of Carrie.

Before Carrie goes to New York with Hurstwood, in her apartment at Ogden Place she rocks and thinks several times: when she has got a chance to appear in a play in a lodge entertainment of the Elks (117); when, on the next day of the performance, after she meets Hurstwood at a park and promises to marry him (161); and when after Drouet leaves her because he finds out that Carrie has been having an affair with Hurstwood (177). In each scene, whenever Carrie has an opportunity to get close to the city, she sits on a rocking chair and thinks over the new world. In these scenes too, the betweenness of rocking chairs is described in association with the process of urbanization of Carrie.

This can also be seen after Carrie is taken to New York by Hurstwood and starts her new life with him there. There are three scenes in which Carrie rocks and thinks after she starts living with Hurstwood in New York. Two of them are seen after Carrie goes out to Broadway to see a play with Mrs. Vance, a neighbor. One evening, Mrs. Vance asks Carrie to go to a Matinee, and Carrie experiences "the walk down Broadway" (226) for the first time. She is shocked by the showy parade, and after she comes back to her room, she "rocks and thinks" (228) and longs to "feel the delight of parading there as an equal" (228). A few days later, Carrie goes out to the theater with

Mrs. Vance again and has dinner at a showy restaurant in Broadway. She meets Mrs. Vance's cousin, Ames, there and is impressed by his intellectual attitude. When she comes back to the apartment, she sits on a rocking chair and rocks and longs to be accepted by intellectuals as an actress (238). Carrie gets a job at a theater soon after this experience at Broadway, and eventually becomes a successful actress there. Curiously, however, after she gets a job at a theater, she never rocks and thinks in her apartment. The hasty change of Carrie's position in the city does not allow her to have time to rock and think. In short, the reality of rapid urbanization in the city is shown here and we can see the overwhelming urban effect upon the pastoral ideal. However, at the end of the novel, despite Carrie's success in the theatrical world in Broadway, she goes back to a rocking chair and rocks and thinks again in a room of the luxurious hotel in Broadway. The description of Carrie rocking and thinking in a hotel room which has "several huge easy rockers" (331) reminds us of the description of her at the beginning of the story, rocking and longing for the city life in a room which has "one small rocking chair" in Van Buren Street. Carrie, at first, dreams of a gorgeous urban life in a room with "a small rocking chair," then, she comes to Chicago and dreams of becoming a member of a luxurious urban society in a room with "several rocking chairs," and finally, in a room of the hotel at Broadway, she longs for the things she has lost in exchange for becoming a member of the city in a room with "several huge rocking chairs." What Carrie longs for in the conclusion is what the people in the cities have lost in the urbanized society, that is, the pastoral ideal. The Carrie of the past,

who symbolizes the pastoral ideal, and the Carrie of the present, who symbolizes the urban sense of value is connected by the image of rocking chairs in the story. The rocking chairs show the situation of the betweenness of the people who are caught in a dilemma between the new sense of value in the city and the pastoral sense of value in the country. Thus, by using the image of rocking chairs effectively, Dreiser describes the instability and betweenness of Carrie, and it represents the unstable urban-pastoral relationship in the city.

4. Conclusion

As we have seen, even in the conclusion of the story, Carrie is not completely separated from the image of the country in this novel. Although it seems as if Dreiser broke the threads which bound Carrie to the country at the beginning of the novel, the threads actually have never been entirely broken, and we can see the shadow of the country behind Carrie all the time throughout the story. In addition, the description of Carrie's dilemma between the urban and the pastoral which is represented in the image of rocking chairs shows the unstable situation of urbanizing society in which people are trapped in a dilemma between the urban and the pastoral. While Dreiser seemingly describes Carrie as a representation of urbanization, he at the same time depicts the image of the country in the description of Carrie. It is true that Carrie represents not only the urban sense of value in the cities in this novel but also shows the pastoral ideal

in the country.

In his second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser lets his second heroine, Jennie, embody what Carrie longs for in the conclusion of his first novel, *Sister Carrie*, which is known as a representative work of American city novels. In *Sister Carrie*, we can see the pastoral elements that are to be developed in Dreiser's following works.

Notes

[1] There is no "Columbia City, Wisconsin"; however, there is a "Columbia City, Indiana." When Dreiser himself came to Chicago in 1887 to look for a job, he left Warsaw, Indiana, and Colombia City is twenty miles east of Warsaw. According to the official website of Indiana, the population of Columbia City, Indiana in 1900 was approximately 2,900. (http://www.stats.indiana.edu/index.asp)

[2] Her desire for imitating others in the city is accomplished in the conclusion of the story as she becomes a successful actress. In the conclusion, Carrie becomes an object of imitation for people around her. This transformation, from the imitator to the object of imitation, we might say, also shows the commercialization of Carrie.

Chapter Ⅱ *Jennie Gerhardt*: Escape from the Urban World

1. Introduction

By describing a shadow of the country behind Carrie and the unstable situation of Carrie who is caught in a dilemma between the urban and the pastoral, and having her dream of what urban society has lost, in *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser shows the reader the instability of the urban-pastoral relationship in the city. In his second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt*, which was published ten years after his first novel, however, he presents his idea about urban-pastoral harmony in a somewhat different way. In this novel, Dreiser projects what Carrie dreams of at the end of *Sister Carrie* into the figure of his second heroine, Jennie, and describes her nature and her life more favorably. Through the description of Jennie, Dreiser shows his relatively affirmative view of the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony. In this chapter, I will explore how Jennie, in *Jennie Gerhardt*, represents the pastoral ideal and how the description of the human relationship suggests the urban-pastoral relationship, and by so doing, I will examine Dreiser's positive attitude toward the possibility of a harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral.

When we carefully examine the description of Jennie and the relationship

between Jennie and people around her, it becomes clear that Dreiser does not always have a negative view of urban-pastoral harmony. In *Jennie Gerhardt*, as in *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser sees the urban life through the eyes of a poor country girl. Because of the similarities between descriptions of Carrie and Jennie, *Jennie Gerhardt* can be recognized as a book which reflects Dreiser's critical point of view of urbanization. However, in *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser does not shun describing the country scenes, and he more willingly describes the image of the pastoral elements in his heroine, Jennie. As Laurence E. Hussman says, although "he devotes many lines to a defense of Carrie's 'good nature,' Dreiser clearly admires Jennie's 'goodness of heart' more" (Hussman 59) by linking her nature to the pastoral ideal. Unlike Carrie, Jennie is displayed as a woman who willingly sacrifices herself for others: her family and her lovers. In portraying Jennie, what Dreiser attempts is, as Clare Virginia Eby argues, "rather old-fashioned, for he aligns Jennie's power with motherhood and the home"(Eby 149). By describing the image of the old-fashioned ideal woman in connection "with the natural world" (Hussman 59) favorably, *Jennie Gerhardt*, in a sense, demonstrates Dreiser's affirmative attitude toward the pastoral ideal.

I will first look at how Jennie is understood by critics, and then will examine how she is in actuality described by Dreiser in this book. Eby points out that "Jennie is perhaps the most controversial and difficult for modern readers to understand of all Dreiser's women characters" (Eby 149). Like Carrie, Jennie relies on male assistance

to survive the capitalistic society, and gets an opportunity to live in the luxurious world through her affairs with men, Jennie, moreover, becomes a kept woman of a wealthy businessman, keeping the existence of her out-of-wedlock child by another man secret. Because of such an unethical way of living and of the similarities to Carrie, some critics read Jennie as a character who demonstrates Dreiser's negative view of the conventional ethical codes. However, as Hussman points out, "the two women are motivated by diametrically opposed instincts." Hussman argues that "whereas Carrie is guided almost exclusively by her self-interest, Jennie is a model of selfless dedication to others" (Hussman 50). Unlike Carrie, who takes advantage of men's fondness for her to satisfy her desire for wealth, Jennie takes advantage of men's fondness to help her family's finances. Jennie keeps being faithful to her liaisons and believing in his love for her throughout her life. Furthermore, Jennie, unlike Carrie who wants to live in the cities for life, prefers to live in nature even if she has chances to live in the cities. In short, as Charles Child Walcutt argues, while in *Sister Carrie* conventional ethical codes are "assumed to be invalid for living well in the cities" and for evaluating life as it is, in *Jennie Gerhardt*, "this emphasis is reversed" (Walcutt 193). Although Jennie is, like Carrie, a seemingly advanced woman who goes against the traditional sense of value in the world, she is actually described as a relatively conventional woman. In thinking of her conservativeness, some critics regard Jennie as an ideal woman for men. For instance, Sybil B. Weir points out that Jennie is a "rare woman who exists only to

satisfy the man's need" (Weir 66). Eby points out also that Lester falls for Jennie because Jennie is a "perfect homemaker for her family" (Eby 150). Thus, Jennie has been recognized as a "young woman sentimentalized and idealized by a middle-aged narrator," as Mirriam Gogol argues (Gogol 136). In short, while she is presented as a new woman,[1] Jennie is described as an ideal woman who represents domesticity at the same time. In his works, Dreiser tends to describe women from the country as dependent and domestic homemaker types of women. They are generally presented as the type of women opposite from the new women who live in the city and appreciate the urban sense of value. That is to say, in Dreiser's works, the domestic women represent the pastoral ideal which is opposed to the urban sense of value. It means that Dreiser displays Jennie as a woman who represents the pastoral and the urban, the old sense of value and the new sense of value. This two-sidedness of Jennie, we might say, indicates the hope to realize a harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral for the people in the cities. I will therefore examine how the relationship between the urban and the pastoral is suggested by Dreiser through the description of Jennie in this book.

John B. Humma says in his essay that *Jennie Gerhardt* is a novel which is about Lester's "dream of escape from urban life and its materialistic values" (Humma 157). This "escape from urban life" reminds us of an expression, "flight from the city," in Leo Marx's discussion. Marx uses this expression in his book *Machine in the*

Garden as a definition of "sentimental pastoralism" (Marx 5). Of the pastoralism in the cities, Marx also writes:

> Although scientific knowledge seemed to drain certain traditional religious myths of their cogency and power, so that it no longer was quite possible to read Genesis as it once had been read, the same knowledge enabled artists to invest the natural world with fresh mythopoetic value. (Marx 96)

As I mentioned in the "Introduction," Marx says that the pastoral image tended to be used as a religious metaphor and makes it clear that people at the time regarded nature as mythical and ideal. However, as Marx writes, while the people dream of the harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral in the cities, in actuality, mechanization, both literally and metaphorically, means "disharmony and separates people from the lovely green landscape," and he says, "the old symbol of reconciliation is obsolete" (Marx 364). People at the turn of the century are forced to choose between potentiality in the cities and a peaceful life in a pastoral setting, and choosing one of the two alternatives became an important issue for people in the city, as has been suggested in American city novels. The necessity of choosing between the urban and the pastoral can be seen in *Jennie Gerhardt*, too, through the relationship between Jennie and other people around her, especially her second lover, Lester.

However, when we read Jennie as a symbol of the pastoral ideal in this novel and think of the two-sidedness in her description, we can see that Dreiser does not always agree with the idea of "the necessity of choosing in the urbanized society." As we have seen in Humma's discussion, many critics have read *Jennie Gerhardt*, in connection with Lester's equivocal attitudes, as a novel which shows us Dreiser's negative idea about urban-pastoral harmony.[2] What we need to pay attention to here, however, is that Lester's dilemma between the urban and the pastoral is always related to the existence of Jennie. The two-sidedness in her nature causes Lester's equivocal position in the society. In addition, as for the description of Jennie herself, in comparison with his other protagonists or women characters, Dreiser describes Jennie more favorably. What Dreiser approves in Jennie is precisely those qualities that represent the pastoral ethic or ideal. Thus, Dreiser does not always write about the complementary relation of the urban and the pastoral from the ironic point of view. In the following, I would like to discuss first how the relation of the urban and the pastoral, and the necessity of choosing between the urban and the pastoral, are represented by the description of the relationship between Jennie and people around her, and then examine Dreiser's affirmative idea about the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony in consideration of the two-sidedness of Jennie.

2. The Urban and the Pastoral as Represented by Lester and Jennie

As I mentioned, in this novel, Jennie is described as an ideal woman for men. Dreiser declares her an "ideal mother" (97), as Eby also points out, "in passages that sound picturesquely archaic, the 'All-Mother'" (Eby 150). As a result, the "selfless Jennie sacrifices her virginity" to her first lover, rich Senator Brander, "in exchange for financial help for her impoverished family" (Eby 150). Jennie meets Brander at a hotel she works for with her mother. The night when Brander asks Jennie to marry him and come with him to Washington in the future, she thinks:

> She dwelt, in imagination, upon the possibilities of a new and fascinating existence. Of course he would marry her. Think of it! She would go to Washington – that far-off place. And her father and mother –they would not need to work so hard any more. And Bass, and Martha – she fairly glowed as she recounted to herself the many ways in which she could help them all. (48)

When she notices Brander's fondness for her, the one who comes into Jennie's mind first is her mother, and Jennie thinks that "she could help the family" (49). We can see that, as I mentioned, Jennie is a woman who desires to devote herself to her home. The

image of the domestic ideal woman in Jennie's nature makes Brander think that she is an "angel" and a "sister of mercy" (46). If Brander plays the role of telling Jennie of the new and luxurious world in a city such as Washington, we can read Jennie here as a symbol of the pastoral ideal.

Furthermore, in this novel, Dreiser often describes Jennie in association with the description of nature. In *Jennie Gerherdt*, the image of the city and the country is chiefly represented in the description of the relationship between Jennie's second lover, Lester, and Jennie. Although Brander is engaged to marry Jennie, he dies from heart failure. Jennie is left alone, but she notices that she is pregnant. After Jennie is kicked out of her family by her religious father, she starts working as a maid for a "large residence" (65), and she meets Lester, who visits the house one day.

Although there are only a few descriptions which directly show Dreiser's views of the world of nature and the urban society in this book, there is an important passage for each. First, about nature, Dreiser writes:

> Flashes of inspiration come to guide the soul. In nature there is no outside. When we are cast from a group or a condition we have still the companionship of all that is. Nature is not ungenerous. Its winds and stars are fellows with you. Let the soul be but gentle and receptive, and this vast truth will come home – not in set phrases, perhaps, but as a feeling, a comfort, which, after all,

is the last essence of knowledge. In the universe peace is wisdom. (56)

On the other hand, Dreiser shows his opinion of the city in describing Lester:

> We live in an age in which the impact of materialized forces is well-nigh irresistible: the spiritual nature is overwhelmed by the shock. […] We are weighed upon by too many things.
>
> Lester Kane was the natural product of these untoward conditions.
>
> (79)

Dreiser then presents the railroad train, telephone, and newspaper as indicators of civilization. These ideas remind us of the definitions of country and of city in Williams's discussions: the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life and the city has gathered the idea of development as I mentioned earlier. If we read the description of the characters in this novel allegorically in connection with the urban-pastoral relationship here, it can be said that Dreiser gives Jennie and the Gerhardt family the role of symbolizing the pastoral and gives Lester and the Kane family the role of symbolizing the urban society.

The indication of the connection between Jennie and nature is shown as early as the beginning of the second chapter of this novel. Dreiser begins the chapter with a

phrase, “The spirit of Jennie – who shall express it?”(10), and presents Jennie as “a creature of mellowness of temperament” (10) which is “caged in the world of material, however such a nature is almost invariably an anomaly” (10). This means that the nature of Jennie is different from the nature of the materialist world, that is, the city. Dreiser displays the connection between Jennie and nature elsewhere too:

> When the days were fair she looked out of her kitchen window and longed to go where the meadows were.
>
> When the soft, low call of the wood-doves, those spirits of the summer, came out of the distance, she would incline her head and listen, the whole spiritual quality of it dropping like silver bubbles into her own great heart. (11)

Here Jennie is described as a girl who appreciates the beauty of nature and this image of her is repeated throughout the story. For instance, in the scene in which Jennie starts living in a rural part of Columbus after she is kicked out of her family by her father, Dreiser calls Jennie a “flower of womanhood” and describes her in connection with the beauty of nature by using the peaceful image of “the wood-doves”:

> Jennie was left alone, but, like the wood-dove, she was a voice of sweetness in

> the summertime. Going about her household duties, she was content to wait without a murmur, the fulfilment of that process for which, after all, she was but the sacrificial implement. (60)

Moreover, in the latter half of the story, too, Jennie is described in connection with nature. For example, when Lester talks about Jennie with Letty, and Letty says to him "you must leave her [Jennie]" (197), Lester says:

> "She [Jennie]'s a woman of a curious temperament. She possesses a world of feeling and emotion. She's not educated in the sense in which we understand that word, but she has natural refinement and tact. She's a good housekeeper. She's an ideal mother. She's the most affectionate creature under the sun."(196)

We can see here that Jennie is displayed as an ideal woman for Lester, and as the opposite of the new women who have urban values. In addition, after Lester leaves Jennie, she settles herself "in the markedly different world [Sandwood] in which henceforth she was to move," and goes "her way" (222). Dreiser describes the life in Sandwood:

> Sandwood life was not without its charms for a lover of nature, and this, with the devotion of Vesta, offered some slight solace. There was the beauty of the lake, which, with its passing boats, was a never-ending source of joy, and there were many charming drives in the surrounding country. […] So this little household drifted along quietly and dreamily indeed, but always with the undercurrent of feeling which ran so still because it was so deep. (223)

Thus Dreiser connects Jennie to the beauty of nature and describes Jennie as an ideal and domestic woman. He calls Jennie an "ideal mother" who "[was] born with that nurturing quality" (61). In *Jennie Gerhardt*, Jennie plays the role of presenting nature as a pastoral ideal.

As the opposite of the pastoral ideal, the urban sense of value is also presented in this story and the character who represents the influence of urbanization on nature in this novel is Lester, as I mentioned. The binary formulation, pastoral ideal (Jennie) versus urban sense of value (Lester) becomes clear as we see the first impression each has of the other when they meet in the Bracebridge's house where Jennie works as a maid. When he sees Jennie for the first time, Lester feels a "pre-eminent femininity" (77) in her nature and feels that Jennie is different from other women. Lester then thinks that Jennie is "a rare flower" (78), and feels the beauty of nature in Jennie. Jennie, on the other hand, is interested in the fact that Lester comes from a city,

Cincinnati, and thinks that "[Lester] was so big, so handsome, so forceful" (76). Thus, Lester is described in connection with the urban world and Jennie is described in connection with the pastoral world. When Jennie starts living on the outskirts of Chicago, in the small rural country town, Sandwood, she recalls a conversation she had with Lester when they passed through the town before. When Jennie, who appreciated the peaceful rural landscape there, said to Lester, "I should like to live in a place like this sometime," Lester replied to her, "It's too withdrawn" (211), adding that he preferred to live in the cities. This conversation allows us to recognize Jennie as a symbol of the beauty of the country and Lester as a symbol of the urban world, and it shows that the worlds they belong to are different from each other. Dreiser later actually has Jennie live in the country, Sandwood, and has Lester live in the city, Chicago. Thus, throughout this story, the connection between Jennie and nature has not been broken.

3 "Urban-Pastoral Harmony" through the Two-Sidedness of Jennie

3.1. Urbanizing Nature

However, when we carefully examine the relationship between Lester and Jennie, it becomes clear that what Jennie represents in this novel is not only the

pastoral ideal but also the reality of the urbanization of the pastoral. Through their relationship, Lester's urbanized point of view has an influence on Jennie. For example, as soon as Lester falls in love with Jennie, he asks Jennie to come with him to New York for his business travel. Although Jennie hesitates to answer him, he says to Jennie forcibly, "You belong to me," "I'm going to have you," and gives Jennie some money to keep her beside him. Such a forcible attitude toward Jennie in Lester can be interpreted as a symbolic reflection of the power of urbanization over a pastoral space. Jennie eventually decides to go to New York with Lester, and it makes Lester feel proud of "his prize" and say to Jennie, "When we get to New York I am going to get you some real things," and "I am going to show you what you can be made to look like" (99). Here, Lester's attempt to take Jennie into his own sense of value, the urban sense of value, in other words, is clearly shown. Jennie, eventually, follows what Lester wishes for and learns what the cities are like and to be urbanized through the relationship with Lester. In addition, Lester's forceful attitude toward Jennie reminds us of the attitude of Drouet toward Carrie when they meet again in Chicago in *Sister Carrie*. In both *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser describes a young country girl with a pastoral image, and lets them go into the urban world with the help of a male city dweller.

Jennie thus represents both a pastoral ideal and urbanization of the pastoral in this novel, and through the description of Jennie, who is in a weak position in the

world, we can also see a supposed sense of subordination of nature in the relationship with the urban society. Although Jennie at first refuses to take Lester's money, she eventually accepts his help to save her family from poverty, and it makes her feel that "there [are] really no alternatives," and that "[h]er own life [is] a failure" (159). The term "failure" is often used in the narrative together with other negative terms such as "shamefully," "shamelessness," and "ashamed" to explain the Gerhardt family.[3] On the other hand, Dreiser often uses terms such as "proud," "prideful," and "authority" with positive connotations when he describes the Kane family. If Jennie represents the pastoral in this story, it can be said that the image of the country is displayed in a position of the weak in contrast with the power of the cities. Jennie's decision to accept Lester's money here, moreover, reveals the fact that people are forced to choose the world of the city, not the world of nature, in order to survive the urbanized society. On this point, it seems as if Dreiser denied the idea of the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony.

The weaker position of the pastoral in the society and the necessity of choosing between the urban and the pastoral in urbanized society become clearer when we focus on the changes in Lester's social position, which is influenced by his relationship with Jennie. For instance, it is represented by the contents of the will left behind by Lester's father, Mr. Archibald, who had had great success as a businessman. During the period, in which Lester and Jennie start to live with Mr. Gerhardt at Hyde

Park in Chicago without getting married, “the dissatisfaction of the Kane family with Lester’s irregular habit of life grew steadily stronger” (160). They believe that Jennie is a woman who doesn’t have a “sense of decency and consideration” and believe that she does not suit their “superior” society (135,137) in the city. Mr. Archibald “brooded over it until he felt that some change ought to be enforced” (161), and he decides to leave the will:

> “Owing to certain complications which have arisen in the affairs of my son Lester,” it began, “I deem it my duty to make certain conditions which shall govern the distribution of the remainder of my property […],” (172)

The conditions “hereinafter set forth” are the following:

> [Lester] was to have ten thousand a year for three years, during which time he had the choice of doing either one of two things: First, he was to leave Jennie, if he had not already married her, and so bring his life into moral conformity with the wishes of his father. In this event Lester’s share of the estate was to be immediately turned over to him. Secondly, he might elect to marry Jennie, if he had not already done so, in which case the ten thousand a year, specifically set aside to him for three years, was to be continued for life – but

> for his life only. […] If Lester refused to marry Jennie, or to leave her, he was to have nothing at all after the three years were up. (172-3)

"Ten thousand a year" is too small an amount of money for Lester if his social position is considered. The conditions teach Lester that if he chooses to live with Jennie, he will lose both his wealth and his social position in the urban society. Moreover, the condition, "if Lester refused to marry Jennie, or to leave her, he was to have nothing at all," forces Lester to choose between a simple life with Jennie and an urban life with the wealth. It can be said that the reason for the "dissatisfaction" of the Kane family with Lester is the supposed immorality of Lester's life style. In addition, if we read the relationships between the Kane family, Lester, and Jennie here in terms of the issue of the urban-pastoral relationship, it can be said that the reason why the Kane family reject Jennie is not only Jennie's supposed immorality, but also Jennie's unsuitability to the "superior" society. The will left behind by Mr. Archibald tells Lester the fact that man cannot live a secure life if he chooses to live in the pastoral space. The pastoral elements in Jennie prevent Lester from being successful in urban society. On this point, Dreiser's negative attitude toward the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony can be seen.

Given the coercive treatment, Lester sets himself in opposition to his family and he decides to resign his post in his father's company. While he is struggling to live

in the society and to find a new job, Lester finds the successful organization of the carriage trade of his brother, and it shocks him. When he is in this mood, Lester receives a visit from Samuel M. Ross, a real estate dealer, and decides to start a business in land speculation. They plan to purchase and develop a forty-acre tract of land in a suburb of Chicago, and will name the land "Inwood" to sell to the people who want to live in nature:

> The land was put in excellent shape. It was given a rather attractive title – "Inwood," although, as Lester noted, there was precious little wood anywhere around there. But Ross assured him that people looking for a suburban residence would be attracted by the name; seeing the vigorous efforts in tree-planting that had been made to provide for shade in the future, they would take the will for the deed. (193; underline added)

Ross's idea here that people "would be attracted by the name [Inwood]" shows that nature has become an ideal space for people in the city to live in. At the same time, it also shows the fact that people in the city had began to aim to use the pastoral image of nature to make a profit. However, this business plan eventually ends up in failure because the International Packing Company, one of the biggest trusts of the packing industry in Chicago, builds a factory near the land, and "Inwood" loses the image of an

ideal residence. Lester's attempt to make a profit by developing nature in a suburb is interrupted by the extension of urban industry into the country. This not only means that pastoral nature is overwhelmed by the urban society, but also means the impossibility of peaceful coexistence of the urban and the pastoral.

The overwhelming power of the city over the country and the necessity of choosing between the urban and pastoral can be seen in the descriptions of Lester's dilemma between Jennie and Letty, who is to be Lester's wife, too. After the failure in his business, Lester goes on an overseas trip with Jennie, and during the travel he meets with Letty, an acquaintance of the society. Unlike Jennie who represents the pastoral ideal and "is natural, sympathetic, emotional with no schooling in the ways of polite society, but with a feeling" (221), Letty is a kind of woman who represents the urban sense of value and "is polished, sympathetic, philosophic – schooled in all the niceties of polite society" (220). Letty says to Lester, "you're too big a man, Lester, to settle down on ten thousand a year," and recommends strongly he leave Jennie and "get back into the social and financial world where you belong" (197). After all, Lester decides to leave Jennie and lets her go to a small rural town, Sandwood, and he goes back to Chicago to start a new life. During the few years after he breaks up with Jennie, a change in social and business position happens to Lester and he gets married to Letty. Choosing to live with Letty, who symbolizes the urban, brings Lester a successful life in the city. The necessity of choosing the city on order to be successful is shown here

again.

The description of Lester's changeable social position seems to represent his dilemma in choosing between urban values and the pastoral ideal. As we have seen, it is clear that the existence of Jennie always influences the changes of Lester's social position. The powerless image of the pastoral ideal suggested by Jennie causes Lester's insecure state in the urban world. For Lester, to choose or not to choose Jennie is a key to becoming successful in the city.

3.2. Nature as the Pastoral Ideal – An Affirmation of the Harmonious Relationship

Thus, in *Jennie Gerhardt*, the pastoral ideal seems to be displayed as a meaningless idea for living in the urban society. Indeed, Dreiser seems to emphasize his negative view of the coexistence of the urban and the pastoral by describing the weakness of Jennie in the urban world. However, when we carefully look at Lester's attitude toward Jennie, Dreiser's affirmative idea about urban-pastoral harmony becomes clear too. Regarding what Lester thinks of his life with Jennie, the narrator says that "[w]ith Jennie he had really been happy, he had truly lived, she was necessary to him; the longer he stayed away the more he wanted her" (216). This means that the life separated from the urban world brings Lester a peaceful and happy life, and shows that people in the city still recognize living in nature as an ideal way of living. In other

words, ideal nature is represented by the pastoral image of Jennie, and it has an influence on the people in the city such as Lester. In this book, while Dreiser describes Jennie as representation of the powerlessness of the pastoral, he tries to show the power of the pastoral ideal over the urban values in her nature.

The figure of Jennie as one representing Lester's pastoral ideal can be seen in Lester's words to Jennie when he lies on his sickbed at the end of the story. His luxurious life after his separation with Jennie allows Lester to be careless of his health, and on the day before Christmas, he is struck down with a heart attack alone at a hotel in Chicago. When Lester knows he is in last days, he wants to see not Letty, who is in New York to see her friends, but Jennie, who lives in a suburb of Chicago. He calls Jennie and says:

> "I couldn't go, Jennie, without seeing you again," […] "I've always wanted to say to you, Jennie," […] "that I haven't been satisfied with the way we parted. It wasn't the right thing, after all. I haven't been any happier. I'm sorry. I wish now, for my own peace of mind, that I hadn't done it." […] "Well. I've told you now, and I feel better. You're a good woman, Jennie, and you're kind to come to me this way. I loved you. I love you now. I want to tell you that. It seems strange, but you're the only woman I ever did love truly. We should never have parted." (244)

Although he achieves success in the urban society as a businessman, Lester here confesses that he is not satisfied with his life. He realizes that choosing to live in the city under the pressure of his father's will was "not the right thing." Lester's reconsideration of his life here means that Lester, in his last days, is still looking for a peaceful pastoral life and he expects Jennie to give it to him. Jennie is described as an ideal refuge free from the burden of urban life for Lester here. While Jennie is described as a woman who relies on a man, she is described as a woman who makes a man rely on her by showing him a pastoral ideal. Moreover, Lester begins to notice that leaving Jennie did not bring a happy life to him; he realizes that choosing between the urban and the pastoral is not always necessary. Jennie thus represents the strength of the pastoral ideal in the city and the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony. While Dreiser seems to have disapproved of the idea of "urban-pastoral harmony" by letting Lester leave Jennie, he affirms the ideal by letting Lester realize the worth of Jennie's pastoral nature, and by denying the necessity of choosing.

The disapproval of the necessity of choosing can be seen in the relations of Jennie, Lester, and Jennie's father, too. When Jennie tries to leave Lester because she thinks that she is not suitable to him, she leaves a letter to Lester on a table. In the postscript of the letter she writes, "P.S. I expect to go to Cleveland with papa. He needs me, He is all alone. But don't come for me, Lester. It's best that you shouldn't" (147).

Jennie's words in the letter eventually lets Lester decide to have their own house at Hyde Park and to ask Mr. Gerhardt to come and live with them. Mr. Gerhardt is a typical poor country man and a devout Christian. He is described as opposite of Lester. By the definition used in Marx's discussion we have seen earlier, he can be read as a symbol of spiritual nature in opposition to the secular world. Lester and Mr. Gerhardt have never related to each other before Jennie has them live together. The existence of Jennie makes it possible that Mr. Gerhardt, who represents the pastoral, and Lester, who represents the urban, live together in a house. Even after he moves to the city, Mr. Gerhardt wants to hold the thread which binds him to the pastoral life in nature. Mr. Gerhardt takes charge of the labor, of the furnace and the yard, which he feels "instinctively concerned him" (152). In the new life with Jennie and Lester in the city, he raises an objection to the urban sense of value embodied by Lester. For instance, when Lester wants Jennie's daughter, Vesta, to go to a dance school, Mr. Gerhardt disagrees with the idea, saying "Such irreligion!"(160). He has also a grievance against Lester's extravagance. Lester's expensive clothes, his overuse of matches, and his over-civilized life irritate him. Mr. Gerhardt's attitude toward Lester here seems to explain his critical attitude toward urbanization. Nevertheless, Mr. Gerhardt knows that Lester is a "good man in some way," and through Jennie, the relationship between Mr. Gerhardt and Lester continues peacefully for the rest of Mr. Gerhardt's life. Right before his death, Mr. Gerhardt expresses his gratitude to Jennie: "You're a good girl,

Jennie." "You've been good to me. I've been hard and cross, but I'm an old man. You forgive me, don't you?" (200). In the relationship between Mr. Gerhardt, Lester, and Jennie, Jennie plays the role of arranging the harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral. In addition, these two men's favorable reactions to Jennie in the last days of their lives also show that Jennie, who seems to be subordinate to men, is admired by the men at the conclusion. Dreiser emphasizes the worth of Jennie's pastoral nature here again and shows his affirmation of urban-pastoral harmony.

4. Conclusion

Thus, as we have seen, while Jennie represents the urbanized nature and the overwhelmed pastoral ideal, she also represents the pastoral as an ideal space for people in the cities. It means that Jennie is described as a woman who has two elements, the urban and the pastoral, in her nature. To make it clear how Dreiser aims to present this two-sidedness of Jennie in his novel, here, I would like to take up Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and to compare Dreiser's description of Jennie with Hardy's description of Tess. It will help us to recognize the fact that while Hardy seemingly shows his negative point of view of Tess at the end of his novel, Dreiser shows his favorable point of view of Jennie throughout the novel, and that Dreiser has a relatively positive position on the complementary relationship between

the urban and the pastoral.

Humma writes about the similarities between Jennie and Tess when he considers "[w]ho is Jennie," and says:

> [L]ike Tess, she [Jennie] is, or becomes, 'maiden no more.' And like Tess she bears a child. Most significant, though, is that both women, despite their despoilings, are 'fresh and virginal daughters of nature' (Hardy 155). Clearly each author wants us to identify his heroine with nature, and Hardy and Dreiser both believe that nature establishes the superiority of the two women. […] Like Tess, she is instinct combined with nature. (Humma 158)

Furthermore, just like Jennie, Tess is described as a woman who has two aspects. It is reflected by the subtitle of *Tess*, "A Pure Woman. Faithfully Presented." Of the controversial term "pure," the author, Hardy, argues in the review of *Tess*'s fifth edition that readers must understand the words "A Pure Woman" more in the sense of the pastoral value of nature than in a sense of the regulated value of society *(Tess*[4] 28). It means that Hardy wants to describe Tess as an indication of the opposition between pastoral values and urban values. The fact that Hardy occupied an important position in Dreiser's literary history is clearly indicated in Dreiser's letters to H.L.Menchken. In their letters, Mencken mentions that Dreiser's writings are influenced by Hardy

(229), and Dreiser concedes that he is right (234).[5] Indeed, as Jie Lu writes in his essay, Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Dreiser's *Jennie Gerhardt* provide "an interesting occasion to probe the question of how these two works could be so near to each other yet so distinctively depicted" (Lu 415). Both Jennie and Tess are displayed as women who have a relationship with a man and get pregnant without getting married and then fall in love with another man, keeping the past as a secret. When they confess their past to their lovers, both Jennie and Tess beg their lover's pardon: "Angel, I was a child" (*T* 258), and "I was so young, Lester" (*J* 126).When they learn the fact, both Angel and Lester tell their lovers to "go to bed" (*T* 263, *J* 126) and they go outside to take a walk. Then they say, "Now, let us understand each other" (*T* 278), and "You and I might as well understand each other" (*J* 127), trying to manage the situations. However, while Angel blames Tess by saying "you are not the girl I loved," and eventually leaves her, Lester realizes his unchangeable fondness for Jennie and decides to continue living with her. Moreover, at the end of the story, while Tess is punished for her unfaithfulness, Jennie is allowed to live a peaceful life. Throughout her life, Tess undergoes several severe experiences. Of her personality, Lu points out in connection with Jennie that Tess is the one who possesses the strong personality at the beginning. At the end of the story, however, she is almost defeated and destroyed by her fate. She is described in the position of the weak throughout the story. By contrast, Dreiser never depicts his heroine as completely hopeless or helpless in *Jennie*

Gerhardt. Jennie never loses her lover's love for her and her peaceful personality. In the end, she has bettered her life in her own way and emerged, not as defeated, but as a stronger woman. Although Dreiser depicts the image of Jennie imitating the image of Hardy's Tess, he does not admit Jennie's guilt and describes her more favorably.[6]

The final scene in which Jennie sits on a seat in an "inconspicuous corner" (247) of the church alone as a stranger on the day of Lester's funeral is, indeed, enough to evoke sympathy from the readers. However, in comparison to Letty, who cannot be present at her husband's deathbed because of her leisure trip to New York, Jennie, who can be present at Lester's deathbed, would not be seen as absolutely unhappy. Letty, in this story, is described as a representation of the luxurious urban life and is chosen by Lester. However, at the end of his life, the one who Lester truly wants to be with is Jennie. Lester's attitude toward Jennie in the conclusion shows his desire for escape from the urban world to the pastoral world, and shows us that Lester dreams of an ideal and peaceful refuge in Jennie. Dreiser may intentionally emphasize the superiority of the pastoral ideal over the urban value by describing Lester's attitude toward Jennie, and shows his admiration for the pastoral ideal.

Jennie Gerhardt, published fifteen years before *An American Tragedy*, which presents the image of urbanized nature itself, is the novel which shows both the process of urbanization and the still influential pastoral ideal in the city. By describing the heroine of such a book favorably, Dreiser expresses his affirmation of, or the hopes

for, the harmonious relationship between urban values and the pastoral ideal.

Notes

[1] Although there are several interpretations of the term "new woman," in my discussion, I will use the term to describes a woman who embodies urbanization, as Carrie does in *Sister Carrie*.

[2] In an article on "Jennie Gerhardt" in *Theodore Dreiser's Encyclopedia*, it is mentioned that the central theme of this novel is Lester's pessimistic and equivocal determinism under the pressure of urbanization (209-12).

[3] Gogol points out that the word "shame" and many variations of it such as "shamefaced, "shamefully," "shamelessness" appear repeatedly in the text when the narrator describes the members of the Gerhardt family, especially Mr. Gerhardt. She also says this idea of "shame" comes from Dreiser's own experience in his beaten life (138-9).

[4] For the rest of this chapter, *T* stands for *Tess*, and *J* stands for *Jennie Gerhardt*

[5] See also Humma.

[6] Lu writes about the similarities and the differences between Jennie and Tess in detail. Lu, however, does not discuss it in connection with the urban-pastoral relationship.

Chapter Ⅲ *The Financier* and *The Titan*: The Changeable Relationship between the Urban and the Pastoral as Evoked through Cowperwood's Affairs with Women

1. Introduction

In his two earlier novels, *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser writes about the reality of the urbanized society and shows the influences of the seemingly weak but actually still influential pastoral ideal over the urbanized society of the late nineteenth century from the viewpoint of powerless young country girls. Dreiser then indicates his relatively affirmative opinion of urban-pastoral harmony at that time especially in *Jennie Gerhardt*, as I have discussed. Unlike those novels, in his next three novels, *The Financier*, *The Titan*, and *The "Genius*," Dreiser writes about the reality of urban life from the viewpoint of original financial heroes and depicts precisely the effects of urbanization upon the society. In those novels, Dreiser showsa more skeptical attitude toward the ideal of the harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral in the city.

A Trilogy of Desire, which includes *The Financier* (1915), *The Titan* (1916) and *The Stoic* (1947), shows the story of the rise and fall of the protagonist, Frank Algernon Cowperwood, a nineteenth-century industrialist who is a connoisseur of fine arts and beautiful women. Dreiser based the character of Cowperwood on the life of

the railway tycoon Charles Tyson Yerkes, a famous "robber baron."[1] Therefore, *The Financier* and *The Titan*, the first and second volume of the *Trilogy*, especially have been recognized as Dreiser's exposure of the corrupt reality of American urbanized society.

Leonard Cassuto writes as follows in an article published in 2012:

> We remember Theodore Dreiser mainly for his deeply felt tales of have-nots who yearn for much more than the world gives them. […] But Mr. Dreiser also wrote admiringly of the wealthy, and this year marks the 100th anniversary of "The Financier," his sweeping and minutely observed story of an enormously successful capitalist. (*The Wall Street Journal* May 4th, 2012)

Charles Child Walcutt takes up *The Financier*, *The Titan*, and the next published novel, *The "Genius"* as novels which are in the second stage of Dreiser's development,[2] and says that, at that stage, Dreiser tries to display the cruel urban society by adding the idea of the self-serving financier to the images of urban society. Walcutt also points out that by containing "perhaps the greatest mass of documentation to be found in any American novels in the naturalistic tradition" (Walcutt 200), those novels show us the urban life itself, and can be understood as the "most representative of Dreiser's Naturalistic novels" (Walcutt 200). Phillip L. Gerber also points out that, compared with Dreiser's other works, "*The Financier* was planned from its inception as an

extensive work based upon research," and says that "it was a complete telling of one very significant and individual American life"(Gerber 134). Gerber then argues that, in *The Financier*, Dreiser tries to reveal the corruption of economics and politics in the Gilded Age by writing about the urbanization of American society from the perspective of a successful financier (Gerber 134).

Thus, when critics read the *Trilogy*, especially its first and second volumes, they tend to point out Dreiser's exposure of the corrupt reality of American urbanized society, and to read those novels as works which show the urban tragedy in the capitalistic society in which the idea of genteel tradition is excluded. However, if we carefully read this novel together with the background of the story and carefully see how the hero's upward mobility is described in association with his quest for the beauty of women, it becomes clear that what Dreiser tries to show in those novels is not just the reality of the corruption of the urban society.

As always in Dreiser's fiction, the *Trilogy* is grounded strongly in the socioeconomic context of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. In that period, industrialization and urbanization rapidly appeared in American society. As James L. Machor observes, American literature has hardly possessed an overwhelming urban orientation. People in the cities at the turn of the century were fascinated with the gorgeousness of the city while they began to notice its cruelty. Meanwhile people in the cities still dreamed of the beauty of nature and had pastoral ideals in contrast to urban values (Machor229-30). As I have already mentioned, Raymond Williams points

out that generally the city has the image of an achieved center; of learning, communication, and money, and the country has the image of a natural way of life; of peace, innocence, and simplicity (Williams 1). That is, the city has "the image of the future" and the country has "the image of the past" (Williams 297), and those two images – a new sense of value and a traditional sense of value - mingled together and formed the dichotomy between the urban and the pastoral.[3]

Given such a social situation and the urban-pastoral definition, it would be possible to consider that, in the *Trilogy*, Cowperwood's upward mobility represents the urbanization of American society. According to Williams, the ideas of the country and the city are various, and they are associated with the transformation of social structure. For example, as he says, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century are associated with the idea of the city with money and law; the eighteenth-century with wealth and luxury; and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century with mobility and isolation (Williams 290). The *Trilogy* is set at the turn of the century. Although when critics discuss the financier's upward mobility they generally tend to underscore only its immorality,[4] if we carefully look at the upward mobility in connection with Williams's discussion, it is possible to understand Cowperwood as a representation of the urban sense of value in this story. In addition, in the *Trilogy*, we can also see Coweperwood's upward mobility and quest for beauty especially to be related with his affairs with women. Although Leo Marx claims that "the pastoral elements in the work of the American writers does not contain a single work that champions the progressive ideology

adhered to by the nation's dominant elites" (Marx 53), if we read Cowperwood's affairs with women together with his upward mobility in his city life, it becomes clear that antithetical relations between the urban and the pastoral are displayed through the description of the relationship between Cowperwood and women in *A Trilogy of Desire*, especially in *The Financier* and *The Titan*. Dreiser's *Trilogy* is, we might say, a work which writes about both the pastoral elements and the urban elements in association with the tangled images of women. By examining how Dreiser describes both elements through women, we also can see his skeptical and equivocal attitude toward the idea of urban-pastoral harmony.

Of Dreiser's portrayal of women, Clare Virginia Eby gives a further discussion in her essay. She says that although "until recently, two responses [to Dreiser's portrayal of women] predominated," "when the tide of feminist criticism beginning in the 1960s and 1970s began to crest on Dreiser, the discussion shifted," and today, Dreiser's portrayal of women "can be variously interpreted" (Eby 142-3). About Dreiser's tangled views of women in his novels, Eby argues that there are "two types of power that he repeatedly associates with them". One, "conventional views of gender roles assign power to women only in restricted areas, such as the capacity to compel male sexual desire or reverence for motherhood." The other is "a second aspect of feminine power which he [Dreiser] traces through economic, social, or artistic accomplishment, and in emotional or psychological authority"(Eby 143). While Dreiser, as Eby says, was fascinated by traditionally feminine attributes, as we have

seen in *Jennie Gerhardt,* he was also fascinated by the progressive second aspect of feminine power, and in depicting women's powers, "Dreiser begins with traditional and even stereotypical assumptions about femininity, but often transcends them" (Eby 143).

In the *Trilogy*, Dreiser portrays various types of women, and the variety of the descriptions of "feminine power" is displayed in association with the tangled relationship between urban values and the pastoral ideal. In this chapter, I would like to pay attention particularly to the different descriptions of three important women who have a relationship with Cowperwood, and then I will demonstrate how they show ambivalent relations between the urban sense of value and the pastoral ideal in those novels.

2. The Urban and the Pastoral through the Descriptions of Three Women

Although Cowperwood has relationships with a large number of women throughout the story, there are three key women who are important in examining the urban-pastoral relationship: his first wife Lillian Semple, his second wife Aileen Butler, and his last love Berenice Flemming. His relationships with those three women occupy a large part of Cowperwood's life. For example, at the end of *The Titan,* Cowperwood tells Berenice of his life as following:

> Let me tell you a little something about my life, will you? It won't take long. I was born in Philadelphia. My family had always belonged there. I have been in the banking and street-railway business all my life. My first wife was a Presbyterian girl, religious, conventional. She was older than I by six or seven years. I was happy for a while – five or six years. We had two children – both still living. Then I met my present wife. She was younger than myself – at least ten years, and very good-looking. She was in some respects more intelligent than my first wife – at least less conventional, more generous, I thought. I fell in love with her, and when I eventually left Philadelphia I got a divorce and married her. […] But my own ideals in regard to women have all the time been slowly changing. I have come to see, through various experiments, that she is not the ideal woman for me at all. (*The Titan*[5] 421)

Lillian, we might say, is presented as a woman who has a "conventional" image, in other words, as a representation of a traditional sense of value; and on the other hand, Aileen is presented as a woman who is "more intelligent" and "less conventional," in other words, as a representation of the new sense of value. Following the definition of the urban and the pastoral given by Williams, as I mentioned earlier -- the country has the image of a natural and traditional way of life, and the city has the image of learning and of a new way of life -- Lillian may represent an image of the pastoral, and Aileen may represent an image of the urban in the stories. Such an image of Aileen also

indicates the appearance of the "New Women," who were educated, independent and who tried to live by their own will in the cities. However, both women are eventually left by Cowperwood. In *The Financier,* Cowperwood's affairs with them are juxtaposed with his ambition to be successful in the world of banking and the street-railway business in the urban society and the business affairs are always given priority. Cowperwood leaves Lillian because her conventional/pastoral nature disturbs his achievement in the world of business at one time, and at another time, he leaves Aileen because her unconventional nature disturbs his success in high society in Chicago. In so thinking, the urban invasion of the pastoral can be seen in Cowperwood's relationship with Lillian, and then, the impossibility of a complementary relationship between urban values and the pastoral ideal can be seen in his relationship with Aileen. On this point, Dreiser's intention of showing negative viewpoints of the harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral is suggested in the description of the relationship between Cowperwood and Lillian, and Aileen.

On the other hand, as Cowperwood himself says to Berenice in the above quotation, his attitude toward Berenice is somewhat different from the one toward his former two loves. Berenice is, on the one hand, portrayed as a woman who has aspects of the pastoral ideal, but on the other hand, she is not described as a woman who prefers to be subordinate to men like Lillian and Aileen. On the contrary, sometimes Cowperwood wants to belong to her. In short, the images of the urban and of the

pastoral come together in the nature of Berenice, and when we think of the urban-pastoral ideal through the description of Berenice, the author's affirmation of the ideal can be seen, too.

In the following discussion, I would like to examine the description of each of the three women and then will attempt to read the urban-pastoral relation allegorically in the relationship between Cowperwood and those three women. Then, I will explore that Dreiser shows both the negative and positive attitudes of toward the ideal of urban-pastoral harmony.

2.1. Lillian Semple

- The Overwhelming Power of Urban Values over the Pastoral Ideal -

Cowperwood marries at age twenty-one a woman five years older, Lillian Semple. Lillian was a married woman when they met each other for the first time. Mr. Semple was a conservative kind of person. He visits Cowperwood's father, who is concerned with the street-car business which is a new form of transportation, to talk about railway business. Young Cowperwood has been interested in railway transportation from the beginning. Meanwhile, Mrs. Semple also catches Cowperwood's interest:

In the meantime, his [Cowperwood's] interest in Mrs.Semple had been secretly

> and strangely growing. […] Mrs. Semple read a little – not much. She had a habit of sitting and apparently brooding reflectively at times, but it was not based on any deep thought. She had that curious beauty of body, though, that made her somewhat like a figure on an antique vase, or out of Greek chorus. […] Thoroughly conventional, satisfied now that her life was bound permanently with that of her husband, she had settled down to a staid and quiet existence. (*F* 43-44)

The beauty of Lillian in this scene is described in association with the pastoral images of ancient Greece that is shown in terms such as "an antique vase" and "Greek chorus." These expressions remind us of ancient Greek arts.[6] By comparing her beauty to images of ancient Greece, Dreiser might be trying to show Cowperwood's expectation of the eternal beauty of women and to portray Lillian as a representative of a pastoral ideal. While Cowperwood is attracted by Lillian's traditional and pastoral beauty itself, he is also interested in dominating that beauty. When his interest in Lillian grows, Cowperwood asserts his own ideas about sexual relationships:

> There was great talk concerning morality, much praise of virtue and decency, and much lifting of hands in righteous horror at people who broke or were even rumored to have broken the Seventh Commandment. He did not take this talk seriously. (*F* 37)

His view of sexual relationships here shows the new sense of value. If Cowperwood represents the urban, or new, sense of value while Lillian represents the pastoral ideal, his desire to have Lillian can be read not just as men's desire to dominate women, but also as a desire that symbolizes urban values invading the pastoral ideal. Furthermore, Cowperwood believes that being successful as a financier in the world of business in the city justifies his egoistic behavior. He gives priority to being successful in the urban society.

At that time, Mr. Semple' meets an untimely death from pneumonia. Lillian is left as a widow and Cowperwood has more opportunities to visit her. The more often he visits her, the better he likes her, and he tries to help and advise her about her business affairs. Because he is considerate, intelligent, and dependable, Lillian comes to like him. Cowperwood then asks her to marry him. For Lillian, who was with a conservative husband for some time, Cowperwood's proposal seems "of a sudden to open up a new world," and she thinks that Cowperwood "represented something bigger and stronger than ever her husband had dreamed of" (*F* 57). A sign of urban-domination of the pastoral can be seen in the relationship between Cowperwood and Lillian here again.

Cowperwood makes remarkable progress in the world of business after he successfully marries Lillian, and it seems as if absorbing the pastoral ideal into the urban leads to rapid progress of the cities. Cowperwood now dreams of creating a street-car monopoly in Philadelphia and of erecting at great cost an impressive

mansion on Girard Avenue, an upper-class residential area, building another next door for his father. Cowperwood contracts a young architect, Ellsworth,[7] and begins to collect works of art to finely decorate his new house. His wife, on the other hand, does not have her husband's interest in the art, but she accompanies him to exhibitions. When they have children, it takes up a big part of Lillian's time. This image of Lillian, subordinated to her husband and devoting herself to housework, represents a traditional image of the ideal woman, too. The old-fashioned images of Lillian make Cowperwood feel that "she was so different from him" (*F* 60), and his dissatisfaction with Lillian begins to increase. Meanwhile, Cowperwood meets the young and beautiful Aileen Butler, and her youthful beauty and unconventionality attract him. Comparing Lillian with Aileen, Cowperwood realizes that " [Lillian] was not like Aileen – not young, not vivid, not as unschooled in the commonplaces of life," and begins to get "irritated" with that moderate yet old-fashioned attitude toward him which used to attract him to her. Cowperwood's irritation here might mean his rejection of the pastoral ideal. In short, the pastoral ideal which is represented by Lillian does not fit the urban sense of value which Cowperwood approves. In other words, Cowperwood's progressive ideology disagrees with the pastoral elements in conventional Lillian. Cowperwood's attitude toward Lillian here indicates the overwhelming power of urban values over the pastoral ideal. The dichotomy between urban values and the pastoral ideal can be seen through the description of the disquieting relationship between Cowperwood and Lillian.

2.2 Aileen Butler

- The Tangled Relationship between the Urban and the Pastoral -

According to Eby, Dreiser sometimes rewrites "the familiar binary which aligns women with emotion and weakness, and men with intellect and strength" (Eby 146). Then, Eby argues that this "is best developed in Aileen Butler, mistress and eventual second wife" of Cowperwood (Eby 146). Cowperwood falls in love with the eighteen-year-old Aileen at a lavish party celebrating the opening of his new house. She is a daughter of his friend, a leading city politician. Comparing his conservative and passive wife with Aileen, Cowperwood greatly appreciates her youth and vitality:

> Aileen, on the contrary, was probably not dutiful, and it was obvious that she had no temperamental connection with current convention. No doubt she had been as well instructed as many another girl, but look at her. She was not obeying her instruction. (*F* 122)

Unlike that of Lillian, this description of Aileen is closer to the images of the New Woman. In her "Women in Dreiser's Fiction," Sybil Weir writes:

> Aileen is a forerunner of many 20th century fictional images of women; the

> erotic, individualistic, anti-type of the 19th century sentimental novel has usurped the place of the sentimentally drawn blonde and become the heroine, or, at least, the female protagonist. (Weir 67)

This means that Dreiser portrays Aileen as a representation of a new type of woman who wants to lead an independent life in the cities and has her own will based on the new sense of value. The urban/ unconventional characteristics of Aileen clearly can be seen in the scene in which Mr. Butler learns about his daughter's unfaithful relationship with Cowperwood. Aileen exclaims emotionally to the furiously angered father that Cowperwood will divorce his wife and marry her, and it shocks Mr. Butler. He looks at his daughter, who is a Catholic, and purer than him for the most part, with incomprehension, and thinks of the Catholic Church and its dogma. This conflict between the father's traditional sense of value and the daughter's new sense of value represents the opposition between the pastoral ideal and urban values, and indeed, as Eby points out, Aileen's emotional and defiant attitude toward her father here emphasizes her insubordination. By associating Aileen with emotion, Dreiser strengthens her unconventional character.

However, while Dreiser describes Aileen with emphasis on her unconventionality, he also projects the image of an ideal woman onto Aileen. For instance, when Cowperwood worries about what will happen when Mr. Butler and Lillian learn about his affairs with Aileen, Aileen encourages him by saying, "I'll do

anything for you, sweetheart" and "I'd die for you if I had to" (*F1*46). Aileen's assertion here indicates her sentimentality and her loyal attitude toward her husband to be. Although Aileen embodies the image of the urban, she is not described as a perfect independent new woman in the cities, and shows aspects of the traditional ideal woman. The nature of the traditional ideal woman in Aileen can be seen also in the description of her appearance: Cowperwood likes "the medallion sharpness of her features – their smooth, Greek modeling" (*F* 146). He expresses her beauty by linking it to the images of ancient Greece and makes the images of pastoral beauty of Aileen clear. Thus, while Dreiser chiefly depicts Aileen's unconventionality, he suggests the pastoral elements in Aileen, too. The tangled relationship between the urban and the pastoral can be seen in the descriptions of Aileen.

In addition, some people in the urban society still think much of the traditional sense of value. They suggest that in American urban society at the turn of the century, the conventional pastoral sense of value and unconventional urban living are intermingled and sometimes cannot be dichotomized simply. Those conventional urbanites show the deep-rooted conventional values in the cities while they seem to enjoy living their urban lives. This can be seen in the description of Cowperwood's struggle to get along with the Chicago society. Despite his favorable business career in Chicago, Cowperwood is forced to face a cruel fact that he has neglected personal relationships in the social world. Cowperwood begins to notice that it happens because his wife is considered too brash and too vulgar to find ready acceptance among the

older, more staid wives in the moneyed classes. The conservative sense of value in the Chicago society is reflected in their ideas about the image of women:

> To really know the state of the feminine mind at this time, one would have to go back to that period in the Middle Ages when the Church flourished and the industrious poet, half schooled in the facts of life, surrounded women with a mystical halo. Since that day the maiden – and the matron as well – has been schooled to believe that she is of a finer clay than man, that she was born to uplift him, and that her favors are priceless. […] Now, the Chicago atmosphere in which Aileen found herself was composed in part of this very illusion. The ladies to whom she had been introduced were of this high world of fancy. They conceived themselves to be perfect, even as they were represented in religious art and in fiction. (*T* 63)

The people who belong to the Chicago society respect a conventional image of ideal women. The deep-rooted conventional sense of value in the urban social world can be seen through their ideas of ideal women. In fact, women in the Chicago society think that Aileen is "almost too pretty" and "too high-spirited," and they "would never want to get near her" (*T* 72). It can be said that, on this point, the New Woman-like unconventionality of Aileen is shown as a factor in her social isolation.

Consequently, Cowperwood comes to blame his wife for his difficulty in the

social world. The growing estrangement between Cowperwood and Aileen is portrayed more clearly in *The Titan*, the second volume of *A Trilogy of Desire*, which is about Cowperwood's business career and the struggle to live in the great city, Chicago. Although Cowperwood once appreciated the advanced urban characteristics of Aileen, he now thinks, "If Aileen had only been a somewhat different type of woman!" (*T* 202), and wishes to have a more conservative type of woman as his wife. The opposition between urban values and pastoral ideal is described through the images of women here again. In his frustration, Cowperwood strays from his marriage to initiate a series of extramarital sexual affairs. Aileen cannot bear the social isolation and her husband's indifference to her, and she eventually tries to kill herself. While Aileen seems to represent the image of a new woman, her subordinate, not independent, nature can be seen here, too.

Cowperwood is first attracted to Aileen's unconventionality in comparison with Lillian, but when he comes into the society of Chicago, the unconventionality of Aileen prevents him from being a part of the society. The complicated circumstances around her shows the reality of the urban society in which the urban and the pastoral are intermingled. The pastoral ideal still retains some authority in the urban society. In other words, through the equivocal description of Aileen and the description of estrangement between Cowperwood and Aileen, Dreiser tries to show the impossibility of actualizing urban-pastoral harmony in the cities.

2.3 Berenice Fleming

- The Possibility of Urban-Pastoral Harmony-

The chances to meet Lillian and Aileen, as we have seen, came to Cowperwood with some business opportunities. Cowperwood gives priority to being successful in the world of business, and his affairs with women are juxtaposed with his ambition to be successful in the business. His restrictive and self-centered attitude toward women represents the urban invasion of the pastoral at the turn of the century and besides, through those descriptions, what appears to be Dreiser's skepticism towards the idea of urban-pastoral harmony can be seen.

However, the relationship between the urban and the pastoral shown in the description of Berenice is somewhat different from the descriptions of the above two women. Berenice Fleming is the teenage daughter of a woman who keeps a brothel. She is a girl who can communicate with the spiritual world and prizes the beauty of nature. Cowperwood now visualizes his ideal woman in Berenice, and she keeps having an influence on Cowperwood up to the end of the third volume of the *Trilogy*. When he sees Berenice for the first time, he thinks that she is "an exceptional" (*T* 371) type of woman and finds the pastoral beauty in her nature:

> With an indescribable smile which wrinkled her nose and eyes, and played about the corners of her mouth, she said: "Now I am going to catch a bird."

> "A what?" asked Cowperwood, looking up and pretending he had not heard, though he had. He was all eyes for any movement of hers. She was dressed in a flouncy morning gown eminently suitable for the world in which she was moving.
>
> "A bird," she replied, with an airy toss of her head. "This is June-time, and the sparrows are teaching their young to fly."
>
> Cowperwood, previously engrossed in financial speculations, was translated, as by the wave of a fairy wand, into another realm, where birds and fledglings and grass and the light winds of heaven were more important than brick and stone and stocks and bonds. (*T* 357-58)

Cowperwood thinks of Berenice's beauty in connection with the pastoral beauty of nature, and begins to believe that pastoral values are more important than business values. Cowperwood now seems to begin to give priority to the pastoral over the urban.

Leo Marx, in the essay which I mentioned before, argues that "the characters who most explicitly endorse or embody that regnant viewpoint also tend to be narrow-minded, self-seeking, and, all in all, morally reprehensible" (Marx 53). However, they tend "to connect recovery of self with the recovery of the natural, and to represent their deepest longings in numinous visions of landscape. In one way or another they all lend expression to what may be called the pastoral impulse; a desire to disengage from the dominant culture and to seek out the basis for a simpler, more

satisfying mode of life in a realm 'closer,' as we say, to nature" (Marx 54).[8] At the end of *The Titan,* Cowperwood wants Berenice to understand him and thinks that being with Berenice makes him happier than having a fortune or reputation. He tells Berenice that his wife does not understand him at all and continues:

> "I don't pretend to understand myself but it has occurred to me that there might be a woman somewhere who would understand me better than myself, who would see the things that I don't see about myself, and would like me, anyhow." *(T* 421)

Considering Cowperwood's attitude toward Berenice based on Marx's opinion, it is possible to say that his idea about the relation with Berenice represents his desire for a "recovery of self with the recovery of the natural" (Marx 54).

Consequently, Cowperwood wants to divorce Aileen, and asks Berenice to marry him. Berenice, unlike Lillian and Aileen who accepted his proposal without any hesitation and tend to subordinate themselves to him easily, does not accept Cowperwood's proposal because she prefers to go her own way. Although she is described as an embodiment of pastoral beauty, this response allows the reader to recognize Berenice as a New Woman, who wants to become independent, too. In addition to that, different from Aileen, who suffers from the opposition of the urban value and the pastoral ideal and is left by Cowperwood, Berenice has been presented as

an important figure for Cowperwood to the end of the story. In this point, two senses of value, the urban and the pastoral, are shown together in the image of Berenice not as contradicting values but as coexisting values.

At the time when Cowperwood begins to be interested in Berenice, he has already become a notorious financier all over the country. However, in front of Berenice, a young girl, Cowperwood gives up dominating the urban society and begins to accept the pastoral sense of value which he has rejected for a long time. A firm image of the pastoral can be seen in the description of the relationship between Cowperwood and Berenice and it also suggests symbolically the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony. Dreiser's intention of showing affirmative attitude toward urban-pastoral relations can be seen here.

3. Conclusion

As we have seen so far, in the Trilogy, Dreiser does not show a single image of women, and when we read the tangled view of women in Cowperwood's indiscriminate affairs with women, especially with three important women, from the perspective of urban-pastoral relations, it can be said that Cowperwood represents symbolically urban values, and his affairs with women suggest the complicated relationship between the urban and the pastoral. In Cowperwood's relationship with the three women, I would argue, three different ideas about the urban-pastoral

relationship are suggested: the imposing of "urban" values upon the "pastoral" ideal represented by Lillian; the intermingled relationship between the urban and the pastoral suggested by Aileen; and the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony by Berenice. Through this transformation, the ambiguity in American society, in which urban values and the pastoral ideal intermingle, is revealed. At the same time, Dreiser's equivocal attitude toward urban-pastoral harmony is also shown in the transformation.

What Dreiser wants to show by portraying a financial hero based on the real-life superman's story is not simply economic and political corruption in the capitalistic society, but also the people's struggle to deal with the opposition of the urban and the pastoral, and his own uncertainty about the urban-pastoral relationship. By displaying his three different points of view of the urban-pastoral harmony through his protagonist's relationships with the three different women, Dreiser reveals his own equivocal opinion not only about "feminine power," but also the issue of urban-pastoral relations. *The Financier* and *The Titan* in this way display accurately the reality of the cities in which people are distressed by the conflict between two senses of value— the new urban values and the traditional pastoral ideal.

Notes

[1] "Charles T. Yerkes was born to Quaker parents in Philadelphia in 1837. He got his first full-time job as a clerk in a grain commission broker's office at age seventeen. At twenty two, he became a broker, opened his own brokerage firm, and joined the stock exchange. He also began his interest in traction and street railways, and opened his own banking house. He then moved on to Chicago, where he developed the city's

street-car network; his last years were spent in London, where he nearly succeeded in a bid to monopolize the local subway system before his death in 1905"(*Chicago "L".org: Historic Figures*). According to Gerber, Dreiser "had been associated with this robber-baron's[Yerkes'] career for the quarter-century extending from that Chicago day (1886) when he fell into an exhausted boyhood sloop with the 'tonic note' of a Yerkes street-car bell sounding in his ear" (Gerber 112). See also Hutchisson (199-200) and Overland (18-22).

[2] In his discussion of Dreiser's naturalism, he categorizes *The Financier* and *The Titan* from *A Trilogy of Desire* with *The "Genius"* into the second stage. Since the *Trilogy* was more than thirty years in the making, the last volume *The Stoic* tends to be understood in a different way from the previous two volumes. For example, Overland reads *The Stoic* as a key to "our understanding of the author's changing philosophy" (Overland 18). Therefore, in my discussion I do not take up *The Stoic* to think of the issue of urban-pastoral relationship.

[3] Williams uses "pastoral" as a word equivalent to "country" in his book, so I will use the word "pastoral" in the same meaning as "country" in my discussion.

[4] *The Titan* especially has been criticized for Cowperwood's womanizing by critics and reviewers. For example, Sherman described *The Titan* as a "huge club-sandwichcomposed of slices of business alternating with erotic episodes" (Sherman 79).

[5] For the rest of this chapter, *F* stands for *The Financier*, and *T* stands for *The Titan*.

[6] The phrase, "antique vase," reminds us of a poem, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820) written by the English poet, John Keats, a principal figure of the Romantic Movement. The poem contains a narrator's discourse on a series of designs on a Grecian Urn. It reinforces the poet's belief that classical Greek art was idealistic and captured Greek

virtues. In the poem, the image of women's beauty is associated with natural beauty. As for the "Greek Chorus," it was a group of actors who commented on the action in a classical Greek play by singing or speaking in union. Their role was to give the main actors a break and time to prepare for the next scene (*Britannica Online*). By depicting the images of women in connection with the image of the supporting role and the images of the past, Dreiser might want to show women's beauty as the pastoral ideal.

[7] In the late nineteenth-century, it was not unusual that people in the upper-class became a patron of architects and had an interest in buildings. Alva Smith Vanderbilt, who was a member of the Vanderbilt family, famous street-car entrepreneurs, for example, is well-known as a patron of a young architect, R.M.Hunt (1827-95). See Boyer for the detail.

[8] As examples of such works, Marx takes up *Moby-Dick, The Scarlet Letter, Huckleberry Finn, The Sun Also Rises,* and *Miss Lonely-hearts* (59). Interestingly, Marx does not mention Dreiser at all in his discussion.

Chapter Ⅳ *The "Genius"*:

The Unstable Relationship between the Urban and the Pastoral

1. Introduction

As in the *Trilogy of Desire*, in *The "Genius,"* Dreiser writes about the issue of the urban-pastoral relationship from the viewpoint of a financier in American urban society, and shows his skepticism towards the peaceful existence of the pastoral elements in the urban society while he partly admires the important effect of the pastoral ideal upon the people in the cities. In short, Dreiser again describes both the pastoral elements and the urban elements in this novel and restates his skeptical and equivocal view of urban-pastoral harmony. He describes the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral in connection with the hero's affairs with women as in the *Trilogy*, but this time Dreiser writes about the subject also in association with the problem of the relationship between the world of art and the world of business. In this chapter, I will examine how the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral is suggested by Dreiser through the description of the relationship between the protagonist, Eugene Witla, and female characters, and the world of art.

The "Genius" has been recognized as Dreiser's most autobiographical novel because of the similarities between Witla's life and Dreiser's own life: his complicated marriage and extra-marital affairs, his career in the publishing world, and

the conflict he faced between the world of "art" and the world of "business." Although Eugene is described as a painter, not a novelist, critics have pointed out several similarities in their lives and read Eugene as the author's alter-ego.[1] In addition, because Dreiser describes Eugene as his other self and projects the reality of the world of American art under capitalism onto him, many critics have recognized that this novel contains Dreiser's criticism of American culture. American culture in the early twentieth century was, as Miles Orvell says in his essay, generally divided into "the high arts and popular culture, into spiritual value and materialistic ambitions, into the world of art and the world of business." Orvell then argues that, in this formulation, "there were few American modern writers who lived in and were interested as deeply in both realms as Theodore Dreiser" (Orvell 127). He takes Dreiser's *Trilogy of Desire* and *The "Genius"* as examples of works in which both art and business are simultaneously described, and cites their major heroes, Frank Cowperwood, a successful businessman and an art collector, and Eugene Witla, a gifted artist who becomes editorial director for a major publisher, as persons who represent the two worlds of art and business together (Orvell 127-29). *The "Genius,"* a book about how to survive the capitalistic society in the early twentieth century from the viewpoint of an artist, shows the conflict between art and business values. Considering that, we can read this novel as a book which shows Dreiser's apprehension of the nexus between art and business, and which displays his critical views on about the reality of American culture's struggle to survive the age in which a national culture was forced to face the

conflict between the world of art and the marketplace. Charles Child Walcutt, on the other hand, groups *The "Genuis"* into the second stage of Dreiser's naturalism with *The Financier* and *The Titan*, and labels the book "Dreiser's most naturalistic novel"(Walcutt 199-205). Walcutt points out that Dreiser's purpose in these novels is to deal with life as it is, and that these novels show us Dreiser's unconventional point of view. Thus, *The "Genius"* generally has been recognized as Dreiser's autobiographical novel, as his cultural criticism, or as a problematic novel which reveals the author's unconventional ideas.

However, when we think of Eugene's struggle to live in the urban society taking account of the social background of this story, it becomes clear that *The "Genius"* is not just a novel which shows us Dreiser's unconventional or critical point of view, but also one which, like Dreiser's other works, deals with the issue of the urban-pastoral relationship. The narrative of *The "Genius"* is based on the American urbanized society in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century when American society faced industrialization and rapid urbanization, as in the *Trilogy of Desire*. In the period, as James L. Machor says, it was difficult for people to accept the transitions of the social structure. While the people were struggling to live in the urban society and realized the callousness of the urban, they were also fascinated with the excitement of the urban, as are two heroes of Dreiser's works, Cowperwood and Eugene. They sometimes appreciated the potentiality in the city but at the same time, they also dreamed of the pastoral ideal the country shows. Reading *The "Genius"* in the context

of such a social situation, it is possible to think that Eugene's oscillation between business and art is suggested in connection with the conflicts between urban values and the pastoral ideal. In short, in *The Genius*, Dreiser writes about the problem of the urban-pastoral relationship in American cities this time through the conflicts between the world of business and the world of art.

In *The "Genius,"* as in the *Trilogy,* the protagonist's problematic relationship with women also shows the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral. The story of Eugene is highly similar to the story of Cowperwood. Both the *Trilogy* and *The "Genius"* are about the life of a successful man in the modern urban society. Both of the young heroes are originally financial supermen and they try hard to survive the complicated city-life with their fortune. Certainly, there are some differences in the way they succeed. While Cowperwood has achieved success as a financier by succeeding in the railroad business, Eugene has gone into the publishing business after giving up painting and succeeds as a financier. However, it should be noticed that their success as businessmen/financiers implies the necessity of getting into the world of business in the cities. At the same time, both books show the heroes' sexual relationships with women in connection with the process of their succeeding in the city. If Cowperwood's affairs with women in the *Trilogy of Desire* can be read allegorically as the representation of an unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral, we could argue that the unstable urban-pastoral relationship is represented in the descriptions of the relationship between Eugene and women in *The "Genius,"* too.

Eugene's Puritanical wife, Angela Blue, for instance, seems to be described as a representation of the pastoral ideal in this novel. She is a woman who was born and raised not in a city but in a small country town, Blackwood, and who respects conventional instructions. By contrast, however, other women Eugene has affairs with are all described somewhat in connection with the urban society. Eugene's variable relationships with women are generally developed in triangular love affairs, involving Angela and one of the women around him. This complicated relationship with women forces Eugene to face the contrast of the conventional and unconventional sense of values around sexual relationships. Considering he has troubles with such unstable relationship with women, then, we could argue that the contrast of the urban and the pastoral is suggested through Eugene's affairs with women.

Thus, in this novel, two contrasts are presented by Dreiser: "business" versus "art" and "unconventionality" versus "conventionality" of sexual relationships. Furthermore, these contrasts are presented in a formation of "urban (Eugene's lovers) / business" versus "pastoral (Angela) / art." By presenting these oppositional points, Dreiser shows the unstable relations between the urban and the pastoral in the urbanized American society. Instead of understanding this novel as Dreiser's autobiographical work or cultural criticism, in this chapter, I aim to explore how the formation of "urban (Eugene's lovers) / business" versus "pastoral (Angela) / art" is displayed in this novel, and to explain how the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral is allegorically represented in the descriptions of the relationship

between Eugene and art, and between Eugene and women. In so doing, I would like to make it clear that *The "Genius"* is a work which, by showing both the pastoral elements and the urban elements, restates Dreiser's skeptical views of the possibility of urban-pastoral harmony under urbanization.

2. The Urban versus the Pastoral in Eugene's Affairs with Women

At first, to examine how the conflict between the urban and the pastoral is represented in the problematic relationship between Eugene's lovers and Angela in this story, I would like to make it clear that Angela embodies the pastoral ideal. Although there are many women who have affairs with Eugene in *The "Genius,"* Angela is the only one who appears throughout the story. Angela was born and raised in a conservative family in a country town called Blackwood. She is a little older than Eugene and is an elementary school teacher. Eugene's variable relationship with women is developed under his marital relationship with Angela. Eugene is often in a difficult situation in which he has to make a choice between Angela and another woman, and faces the conflict between the traditional rural sense of value and the new urban sense of value. The change in Eugene's sexual relationship represents the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral, and in the relationship, Angela plays the role of implying the pastoral ideal. For example, when Eugene sees Angela for the first time, he feels:

> He thought her young; and was charmed by what he considered her innocence and unsophistication. […] In the conventional sense she was a thoroughly good girl, loyal, financially honest, truthful in all commonplace things, and thoroughly virtuous, moreover, in that she considered marriage and children the fate and duty of all women. […] Her own emotions, though perhaps stronger than his, were differently aroused. The stars, the night, a lovely scene, any exquisite attribute of nature could fascinate him to the point of melancholy. (43)

Angela is described as being loyal to the traditional image of an ideal woman and to the conventional sense of value, and Eugene admires her "unsophisticated" beauty. Angela's words to Eugene when she visits him in Chicago -- "I'm just a country girl and I don't get to the city often" (44) -- also show that Angela is displayed as a "country" girl who has an opposite image to that of new women in the city. Angela embodies the image of pastoral beauty here, and such an image of her can be seen again in the scene in which Eugene comes to Blackwood to see Angela and her family. On his way to Angela's home, Eugene takes a look at a peaceful sight of the surroundings on a carryall:

> There were so many lovely wild flowers growing in the angles of the rail

> fences – wild yellow and pink roses, elder flower, Queen Anne's lace, dozens of beautiful blooms, that Eugene was lost in admiration. His heart sang over the beauty of yellowing wheat fields, the young corn, already three feet high, the vistas of hay and clover, with patches of woods enclosing them, and over all, house martens and swallows scudding after insects and high up in the air his boyhood dream of beauty, a soaring buzzard. (77)

He feels that "we city dwellers do not know" (77) such a peaceful scene in the country. Here, though he was also born in a rural area, Eugene recognizes himself as a member of the "city dwellers," who lives in a different world from where Angela lives, and appreciates the beauty of nature in the country. Sitting in the hammock with Angela in her home, Eugene learns how the Blue family lives a country life, and thinks that it is "so pastoral, so sweet" (83). He is impressed by their simple living as if it is the finest thing in the world. The feelings Eugene has here, we might say, are what the feelings people in the cities have for the pastoral, namely the "urban-pastoral ideal" – a longing for the coexistence of the urban elements and the pastoral elements in the city – and the one who makes Eugene have such feelings is Angela.

In Angela's view of life itself, we could see that she is a woman who respects the conventional sense of value, too. For example, Dreiser writes about her opinions about marriage:

> Angela's mental and emotional composition was stable. She had learned to believe from childhood that marriage was a fixed thing. She believed in one life and one love. When you found that, every other relationship which did not minister to it was ended. If children came, very good; if not, very good; marriage was permanent anyhow. And if you did not marry happily it was nevertheless your duty to endure and suffer for whatever good might remain. You might suffer badly in such a union, but it was dangerous and disgraceful to break it. If you could not stand it anymore, your life was a failure. (54)

This idea which gives priority to getting married is totally different from what the new type of women, who appeared in the cities at the turn of the century, think about marriage, and it allows the reader to understand Angela's conventional nature. After she meets Eugene, Angela learns what city life is like, and begins to think that her own world is "shabby" (53). This idea shows that they live in different worlds: the world Eugene belongs to represents the city, and the world Angela belongs to represents the country. Of this apparently incompatible relationship between Eugene and Angela, Dreiser writes:

> Perhaps they complemented each other at this time as a satellite complements a larger luminary – for Eugene's egoism required praise, sympathy, feminine coddling; and Angela caught fire from the warmth and geniality of his

temperament. (44)

The possibility of the complementary relationship between Eugene and Angela is suggested by Dreiser here, and it shows Dreiser's expectations of the urban-pastoral harmony.

Thus Dreiser suggests the pastoral ideal in the descriptions of Angela in this story, and the pastoral image in Angela becomes clearer when we compare it to the images of other women who associate with Eugene in the period of his engagement. By describing the triangular love affairs, of Eugene, Angela, and another woman, Dreiser shows the conflict between the urban and the pastoral. In the following, I would like to see how the other women who associate with Eugene are described and see how the conflict between the urban and the pastoral is represented in the description of Eugene's affairs with women in this novel. After he starts to go to the art school in Chicago, for instance, Eugene meets Ruby Kenny, a nude model for his life class, and is fascinated by her daring beauty. One day in the classroom, they talk with each other for the first time:

> "Where do you live? I'll want to know that." He [Eugene] searched for a pencil. She [Ruby] gave him her number on West-Fifty-Seventh Street. […] It was a street of shabby frame houses far out on the South Side. He remembered great mazes of trade near it, and unpaved streets and open stretches of wet prairie

land. (49)

This shows that Ruby was not raised in the beautiful natural environment like Blackwood, but she was raised in the area which was just about to be urbanized in Chicago. It means that Ruby is closer to the image of the urban in comparison with Angela. One day, he visits Ruby's house and has sex with her. It is the first experience for him and he hopes to continue the relationship with her although he wants to marry Angela at the same time. This description of Eugene, who weaves between Ruby, who shows him the new world, and Angela, who shows him the pastoral ideal, implies the conflict of the urban and the pastoral in the city. But after all, Eugene concludes that Angela is "purer than Ruby" and chooses Angela, not Ruby, to live with. Eugene's appreciation of the pastoral ideal can be seen in the conclusion of their relationship.

However, soon after he comes back to New York from his visit to Angela's house in Blackwood, he meets two woman artists: a sculptor, Miriam Finch, and an international prima ballerina, Christina Channing. He gets used to the urban life through his relationship with those women, and he falls in love with Christina. She is described as a New Woman: a new type of women who are intellectual, artistic, and independent, and appeared in the cities at the turn of the century. She tells Eugene what city-life is like, and Eugene is fascinated by her youth and beauty. For the summer vacation, Christina invites Eugene to her bungalow at Florizel which is up in the mountains, the Blue Ridge, in Southern Pennsylvania, and he agrees to go with her

instead of visiting Blackwood to see Angela. During the time in Florizel, Eugene and Christina take a trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains for seven days:

> These days, under such halcyon conditions, made a profound impression on him. He was struck with the perfection life could reach at odd moments. These great quiet hills, so uniform in their roundness, so green, so peaceful, rested his soul. He and Christina climbed, one day, two thousand feet to a ledge which jutted out over a valley and commanded what seemed to him the kingdoms and the powers of the earth--vast stretches of green land and subdivided fields, little cottage settlements and towns, great hills that stood up like friendly brothers to this one in the distance. (106-07)

Eugene feels the youth and beauty of Christina in the nature of the mountains, and feels the peaceful beauty of nature at the same time. He concludes that Christina "is the most wonderful being he has ever known." He desires to have a permanent relationship with her and to possess her, yet unlike Angela, who willingly belongs to Eugene, Christina does not want to belong to a man and on the last day in the Blue Ridge, she explains her view of life to Eugene:

> "Now, when you see me again I will be Miss Channing of New York. You will be Mr. Witla. We will almost forget that we were ever here together.

> We will scarcely believe that we have seen what we have seen and done what we have done."
>
> "But, Christina, you talk as though everything were over. It isn't, is it?"
>
> "We can't do anything like this in New York," she sighed. "I haven't time and you must work." There was a shade of finality in her tone. (108)

Christina takes a firm attitude toward Eugene here and claims that their romantic days in nature are not suitable to the city life. Her attitude here, the rejection of having a permanent relationship with a man, represents the image of New Woman in the cities and it is opposed to the way she behaved to Eugene in the Blue Ridge. While Christina shows the image of an ideal woman who "[has] given him of herself fully" in the mountains, she shows the image of a New Woman who wants "to be free to work" in the urban society (108). Christina, in short, shows Eugene both an image of urban values and an image of pastoral values, and Eugene wants to have her. Thus, we might say, his desire to possess Christina represents his desire to conquer both of the two worlds, the urban world and the pastoral. In other words, his hope to have Christina represents the expectations of urban-pastoral harmony in American cities at the turn of the century. Eventually, however, Eugene's desire is denied by Christina. This, we might say, shows the impossibility of urban-pastoral harmony. Although Dreiser once showed his expectations of the harmonious relationship between urban values and the

pastoral ideal, he here shows a skeptical view of urban-pastoral harmony. The change in Dreiser's attitude toward the urban-pastoral relationship can be seen in the change in Eugene's relationship with women.

Dreiser's skeptical view of urban-pastoral harmony is suggested in the relationship between Eugene and Angela after Eugene comes close to Christina. The rejection by Christina hurts Eugene's pride and finally he concludes that "[Angela] [is] a girl who [will] not treat him so. She really [loves] him. She [is] faithful and true" (113). Angela's conservative nature leads Eugene to come back to her again, and Eugene's decision to do so implies that the pastoral ideals have more influential power on him, and, by extension, on the people in the city, than the urban sense of value has. At the same time, however, Eugene comes to doubt if Angela could adapt to the city life and if he should really marry her. In actuality, when Eugene marries Angela, his acquaintances in the world of urban art tell him that he is making a mistake and think Eugene is a fool because he follows the conventional sense of value. Furthermore, Eugene's father also thinks that Eugen's marriage with Angela "robbed the family of a possible glory" (127). Thus, people around Eugene believe that Angela is not adapted for urban life, and does not suit Eugene. Dreiser says here that "it was hardly possible for Angela and Eugene not to renew the old relationship on the old basis" (118). It now becomes more difficult for Eugene, who is in the city, and Angela, who is in the country, to live together peacefully. By making their relationship unstable, Dreiser, while he admires the influential power of the pastoral, might show his now skeptical

idea about urban-pastoral harmony.

To see Dreiser's skeptical view of urban-pastoral harmony in more detail, we need to look at another important woman who associates with Eugene, the great and the last love of his life, the eighteen-year-old Suzanne Dale. Because the unstable relationship with Angela diminishes his artistic ability, and brings him a nervous collapse, Eugene decides to separate from Angela while he recuperates. He decides to reform himself; however, after he fortunately finds a job as an art director in a publishing business and rises to be a successful financier, he finds the young and beautiful Suzanne and falls in love with her. When he sees her for the first time, he thinks, "Youth! Youth! What in this world could be finer [?]" (325), and praises her beauty. Just as when Eugene fell in love with Ruby and Christina, he is attracted to the advanced image in Suzanne.

Suzanne's unconventionality is suggested clearly in the description of her provocative attitude toward Angela when Angela exposes Eugene's previous affairs to Suzanne. When Angela curses Suzanne, Suzanne says to Eugene, "I don't care about the past" (381), and persists that she is not a kind of woman who is obsessed by the past like Angela. Moreover, when Suzanne's mother, Mrs. Dale, who is in a rage when she learns of her daughter's affairs, scolds Suzanne, she says to her mother, "You don't understand me. You never did, mama," and "I love Mr. Witla. […] I don't care anything at all about what people think" (394). She persists that she is not a woman who is obsessed by the conventional sense of values. Suzanne's assertions here show

the image of a New Woman who does not care about traditional ideas.

However, what Suzanne represents in this story is not only unconventionality and the urban sense of value. Considering Eugene's idealization of Suzanne, we can also say that Suzanne shows Eugene the pastoral ideal. Under the influence of Mrs. Dale, Eugene loses his job and his fortune, and with the forfeiture of those, he loses Suzanne too. Mrs. Dale's actions here seem cruel, but as Hussman points out, they save Suzanne from "the rigors of living up to Eugene's expectations" (Hussman 100), and the "expectations" means to "require a woman who is physically beautiful, perpetually eighteen yet experienced and worldly wise, passionate but virginal, sensuous though innocent" (Hussman 100). Eugene here demands both unconventionality and conventionality of women. In short, Eugene expects in Suzanne not only a new urban sense of value but also a traditional pastoral ideal, urban-pastoral harmony. This will be more clearly shown in Eugene's action when he loses Suzanne. After Suzanne leaves him, Eugene remembers a poem written by Keats. He likens the romantic days with Suzanne to the beauty of flowers shown in the poem, and grieves about losing such days.[2] Here, Dreiser emphasizes the pastoral nature of Suzanne, and Eugene misses it. Suzanne, as Ruby and Christina had, represents two elements, the urban and the pastoral, together, and Eugene's desire to have her represents the hope for harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral in the city. However, Eugene's wish fails after all. This failure means the impossibility of co-existence of the elements of the urban and the pastoral under urbanization. Dreiser's skeptical attitude

toward urban-pastoral harmony is suggested here again in the description of the relationship between Eugene and Suzanne.

In the conclusion of the story, we can see the influence of the pastoral ideal upon the urban society, too, in Eugene's attitude toward Angela. Given the failure of his hopes to have Suzanne at the conclusion of the story, Eugene goes back to Angela. Although Eugene devotes his life to pursuits of money and women, he begins to reflect on his self-centeredness when Suzanne leaves and Angela is taken with illness that eventually causes her death in childbirth. The following conversation is held between Eugene and Angela soon after Angela gives birth:

> Eugene cried also. "It's a girl, isn't it?" she asked. "Yes," said Eugene, and then, after a pause, "Angela, I want to tell you something. I'm so sorry. I'm ashamed. I want you to get well. I'll do better. Really I will." […] She caressed his hand. "Don't cry," she said, "I'll be all right. I'm going to get well. We'll both do better. It's as much my fault as yours. I've been too hard." […] "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry," he finally managed to say. (471)

Angela eventually dies, but this conversation between Eugene and Angela makes it clear that Angela is described as an ideal woman who is loyal to her husband to the end of her life, and that Eugene finally admires her nature. Although he has sought the beauty of young urban women, Eugene appreciates the significance of pastoral beauty

in Angela after all. Furthermore, he decides to live with their daughter, Angela, Jr., through the rest of his life. Although Angela's life seems to show the losing pastoral ideal in the urban society because she has been unhappy with her husband's affairs with other women who show urban values to Eugene, what is suggested in the conclusion of this novel, in which Eugene eventually comes back to Angela and decides to live with Angela, Jr., is the strong influence of the 0pastoral ideal upon the urban society.

Thus, in *The "Genius,"* as in the *Trilogy,* Dreiser shows the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral in the American urban society by describing the changeable relationship between a male hero and women. In this way, Dreiser restates his equivocal attitude toward urban-pastoral harmony.

3. Urban Pastoralism and the World of Art

3.1. "The Urban/Business" versus "the Pastoral/Art"

As I have discussed so far, the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral is represented allegorically by the descriptions of Eugene's relationships with Angela and other women. Yet what indicates the relationship between the urban and the pastoral in this novel is not only Eugene's struggle to choose between Angela and other women. The conflict between the world of "business" and the world of "art"

also implies the conflict between urban values and the pastoral ideal in this book. As Eugene gets used to the city life in New York, he notices that he needs more money to enjoy his urban life:

> New York presented a spectacle of material display such as he had never known existed. […] Art as he had first dreamed of it, art had seemed not only a road to distinction but also to affluence. Now, as he studied those about him, he found that it was not so. Artists were never tremendously rich, he learned. (98)

Eugene finds that art is often useless as a way to become rich in the cities. The "art" here means "traditional" art which is influenced by French Impressionism, and is Eugene's artistic style in his early days. French Impressionism was introduced to the American public in the 1880s, and then American impressionism emerged as the main artistic style in the world of American art. The artists avoid using vivid colors and tended to like painting beautiful scenery in the country or nature[3], and this is the style of Eugene's earlier paintings. I will call this artistic style "traditional" art in my discussion in comparison with the "urban" art. The idea that the art is often useless as a way to become rich comes to Eugene's mind when he lives in New York by himself doing some physical labor to recover from mental illness, too. At the time, he could be a celebrated artist again, but he gives up his art to become a well-paid executive

manager of a magazine corporation. The conflict between the value of art and profitable business can be seen here. This formulation, “the urban/business” versus “the pastoral/art” is shown more clearly when Winfield, who has a plan to establish on the South Shore of Long Island a magnificent seaside resort called Blue Sea, asks Eugene to invest fifty thousand dollars of his fortune in The Sea Island Development Company. According to the conversation with Winfield, fifty thousand dollars invested would be two hundred-fifty thousand dollars in the future. It fascinates Eugene and he accepts the proposition. However, while Eugene is very interested in the proposition, Angela has a different idea:

> Angela finally said, “ […] We have enough now, really, to live on, if you want to return to your art.”
>
> Eugene smiled, “My art. My poor old art! A lot I’ve done to develop my art.”
>
> “I don't think it needs developing. You have it. I'm sorry sometimes I ever let you leave it. We have lived better, but your work hasn't counted for as much. What good has it done you outside the money to be a successful publisher? You were as famous as you are now before you ever started in on this line, and more so. More people know you even now as Eugene Witla, the artist, than as Eugene Witla, the magazine man.” […] “Why don’t you paint any longer?” “What a shame you ever left the art world!” “Those

pictures of yours, I can never forget them."

"My dear lady," Eugene once said solemnly, "I can't live by painting pictures as I am living by directing magazines." (332-3)

Angela believes in the value of art, and urges Eugene to return to his serious paintings and wants him to be a successful artist again, not a financier, but by contrast to her wish, Eugene claims that art does not allow them to live luxuriously and he chooses to live as a financier in the world of business. The "art" at this point means traditional art. The people in the world of business, furthermore, think that Angela's idea that traditional art is superior to business is "not exactly suited to that topmost world in which he [Eugene] [was] now beginning to move" (313). The art, we might say, is described in connection with the image of Angela, who represents the pastoral ideal. It means that traditional art represents the pastoral ideal in this story, too. Furthermore, both traditional art and Angela are described as factors which are not suited to the urban sense of value. The contrast of urban values and the pastoral ideal is reflected in the contrast of the business in the urban society and the art. Besides, it should be noticed that the pastoral ideal/traditional art is presented as an inadequate element in the urban society. The "pastoral ideal/traditional art" is considered socially inferior to "urban values /business" in this novel.

3.2 An Internal Conflict between "the Pastoral Ideal and Traditional Art"

In *The "Genius,"* however, the world of art is not always described in opposition to urban/ business values. As Orvell points out in his essay, there were several conflicts in the world of American art itself in the late nineteenth century: high culture versus popular culture, materialistic ambitions versus spiritual values, and the world of business and the world of art. Although these oppositions could be seen in the past too, in American art, especially at the turn of the century, it became more obvious because American painters who painted urban life began to emerge as the most aggressive force in the artistic revolt against the Genteel Tradition.[4] Their activities make the conflicts clearer. At the turn of the century, in short, the world of American art itself was also faced with the conflict between the new urban values and the traditional pastoral ideal.

This can be seen in *The "Genius,"* too, in the descriptions of art. At first, Dreiser portrays Eugene not as just a great painter, but as a great American impressionist. However, in the conclusion of the story, Dreiser has Eugene go back to the world of art not as a great painter of American impressionists, but as a modern American painter who paints the vitality of urban life. By doing so, Dreiser might be trying to show the rise of New York realists as a new stream in American art and to put an emphasis on urbanization of American art. As Cyrille Arnavon explains, Dreiser was interested in the world of art from the early stage of his career as a writer

(Arnavon 113). Although he was interested in French Impressionists at first, through his newspaper and magazine careers, Dreiser met some modern artists who appeared as "the most aggressive force in the artistic revolt against the tradition-bound National Academy, and believed that they were influential in the world of American art in the late nineteenth century" (Arnavon 113). The group of artists were known as the notorious "Ashcan School" and brought a new trend into the world of American art at the time. Dreiser seems to be basing Eugene on such "Ashcan School" painters, as Robert Henri, Joan Sloan, and especially Everett Shinn.[5]

Eugene's later paintings recall not only those in the Ashcan School style, but they also represent Dreiser's own image of the city. Eugene becomes a well-known artist in New York again in the conclusion of the story by painting urban life.[6] It means that giving up traditional art and taking in a new sense of value is a way to survive the city life. By evoking the image of the Ashcan School, who opposed traditional art, in his novel, Dreiser tries to demonstrate the powerful influence of urban values over the traditional pastoral ideal and displays the conflict between them.

The descriptions of internal conflict between urban values and the pastoral ideal in the world of art can be seen also in the description of Angela, who is in a weak position in the world of art in New York. When Eugene marries Angela, his acquaintances in the world of art tell him that he is making a mistake and think Eugene is a fool because he follows the conventional sense of value. Miriam thinks that Angela is "not very important after all, not of the artistic and superior world to which she and

he [belong]" (140), and considers Angela to be a woman who is not suited to the urban art society. The art and Angela, on the one hand, seem to ally with each other and represent the pastoral ideal in this novel, but on the other hand, in the world of art, Angela, who presents conventional ideas, conflicts with the new type of art, and this new conflict disproves the symbolic linking of "the art" and "the pastoral (Angela)." When Eugene rises again as an artist, he goes back to the world of art with the style of the Ashcan School. By presenting Eugene as a successful modern painter in the city at the end of the novel, Dreiser emphasizes the emergence of the new artistic style in American art under urbanization.

Thus, in *The "Genius,"* while Dreiser depicts the world of art in opposition to the world of business, he also notices that there is a new trend in the world of American art. He explores the existence of the conflict between urban values and pastoral values within the world of art, and emphasizes the powerful influence of the urban upon the pastoral ideal in American urban society. While Dreiser displays the influences of the pastoral ideal in the conclusion of the relationship between Eugen and Angela, he shows the influences of the new stream of urban art in the conclusion of the relationship between Eugene and art at the same time. Describing this instability of the world of American art in the urban society in connection with Eugene's changeable relationship with women, Dreiser displays again the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral in the urban society at the turn of the century.

4. Conclusion

Eugene has been seeking the beauty of women and material comforts in urban life; however, at the end of the story, he loses both of them as a result of his extra-marital affairs. Dreiser punishes Eugene with confusion and loneliness, yet from the severe situation, Dreiser allows him to come back to society again, this time as a painter, and to live with little Angela, Jr. Thus, as we have seen, although Eugene's art and Angela were once excluded from the urban world which Eugene belongs to because of their conventionality, at the end of the story, both Angela and the art come back to Eugene and make him learn their necessity to live a peaceful life. It means that Angela and his artistic talent exhibit considerable influence over Eugene throughout *The "Genius."* In this point, as I argued earlier, it seems that, in the conclusion of the story, the deep-seated conventional sense of value in the urban society is suggested, and Dreiser's somewhat affirmative idea about the pastoral ideal seems to be suggested. However, when we carefully think of the *type of artist* Eugene becomes at the end of the novel, it would be difficult to conclude that Dreiser shows us only his affirmative idea about the subject. When Eugene returns to the world of art, he decides to paint urban subjects such as "laborers, washer women, drunkards" (474), and his pictures eventually sell for a record. In short, Eugene comes back to the world of art this time as an urban artist. Eugene gives up painting the beauty of nature

to sell his paintings, and his new paintings which are opposed to European art actually sold for a record. Dreiser reveals the fact that giving up traditional art and taking in the new style of American art allow the artists to enjoy their life in the city. In suggesting such a reality of the world of art, Dreiser also emphasizes the powerful influence of the urban sense of value in the world of American art.

Thus, while he shows an affirmative view of the pastoral ideal in the city, Dreiser admires the great power of urbanization, too. The urban sense of value and the pastoral ideal are intermingled in the conclusion of *The "Genius."* Reading *The "Genius"* in this way, it would be possible to state that, in this novel, the unstable relationship between the urban and the pastoral is shown through the description of Eugene's unstable relationship with women, and art. If the *Trilogy of Desire* shows us a businessman's struggle to survive urban life, *The "Genius"* shows us an artist's struggle to survive the world of art in the urban society governed by business values. In the conclusions of both stories, Dreiser emphasizes the firm influence of the pastoral ideal on the urban society while he appreciates the power of urbanization. *The "Genius,"* in that way, is not a work which shows Dreiser's unconventional view but one which restates his equivocal attitude toward the urban-pastoral ideal.

Notes

[1] Hussman points out that reading *The "Genius"* as Dreiser's autobiographical novel is the mainstream among the critics (Hussman 91). Riggio also points out Dreiser's alter-ego in the image of Eugene and argues that Dreiser writes of his own experience

in the cities by describing the life of a young American artist (Riggio 34).

[2] Soon after Suzanne leaves Eugene, he recalls a stanza of John Keats's (1795-1821) poem "The Day Is Gone." Thinking of the style of Keats's poem, which pays homage to the beauty of nature, it can be said that Eugene links the days with Suzanne to the beauty of a blooming flower and regrets losing the beauty. Eugene's melancholic idea shows us the fact that there are some city dwellers who still stick to the pastoral beauty.

[3] See *Art Words*. In addition, according to the article "American Impressionism" on the website of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, American impressionism lost its influence in American art after a historic exhibition of modern art called the "Armory Show" held in New York in 1913. Unlike the impressionists, modern painters pictured a faster-paced and chaotic world. According to Arnavon, Dreiser favored the French impressionists in his early days (113).

[4] The Genteel Tradition here may mean "French impressionism."
The most representative event in the new stream in modern American art was a successful exhibition by "The Eight" in New York's Macbeth Galleries in 1908. "The Eight" was an independent group within American Realism. Members were Robert Henri (1865-1929), John Sloan (1871-1951), William J. Glackens (1870-1938), George Luks (1866-1933), Everett Shinn (1876-1953), Ernest Lawson (1873-1939), Arthur B. Davies (1862-1928) and Maurice B. Prendergast (1858-1924). They were convinced that European art was no longer the measure of things. They were called the "Ashcan school" and tried to paint the urban life as it is (*Art Words*).

[5] Many critics point out that Dreiser portrays Eugene based on the life of Everett Shinn, a member of the "Ashcan School." As Kwiat explains in his article, Everett Shinn himself has also given evidence of his personal relationship to Dreiser (Kwiat 17).

[6] See Kwiat. As he points out, while Shinn is often recognized as Dreiser's model for Eugene, Eugene's style of painting seems closer to John Sloan's urban scenes. For example, Sloan's "Six O'clock, Winter" can be taken as the model for Eugene's East Side picture, "Six O'clock," which he sent to the National Academy of Design exhibition. It shows that Dreiser is conscious of the general influence of the Ashcan School on American modern art. He also wrote an article titled "Six O'clock" which was collected in his *The Color of the Great City*. According to the writings, Dreiser can appreciate the spirits of the new artists who try to depict American urban life as it is.

Chapter Ⅴ *An American Tragedy*: The Dissonance of Urban-Pastoral Harmony —Lakes as a Symbol of Urbanized Nature

1. Introduction

In comparison with his earlier novels, in *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser concentrates more on describing nature itself, and writes about the transformation of the society in the countryside under urbanization. He demonstrates two problems in the society outside cities: the urbanization of nature and the still surviving traditional stratum. By setting the narratives in nature and describing the problems there under urbanization, Dreiser shows "the dissonance that pastoralism always generates at the junction of civilization and nature" in Marx's words (Marx, "Pastoralism" 58). In *An American Tragedy*, we can see Dreiser's relatively negative ideas about urban-pastoral harmony.

An American Tragedy, which was published in 1925 and has been recognized as Dreiser's most successful work, differs greatly in structure from Dreiser's earlier novels. As Walcutt points out, Carrie is left in the center of the city purposelessly in the conclusion of the story. Lester and Jennie are buffeted about, but not through any sharply articulated dramatic sequence of events. Cowperwood and Witla, likewise, move through a long series of incidents which are not integrated into a single action (Walcutt 210). These insecure situations of the protagonists represent the unstable

situation of the people in the cities, and it seems to reflect Dreiser's equivocal conception of the urban-pastoral relationship. In his four earlier novels, Dreiser chiefly observed the city itself and depicted the conflict between the urban sense of value and the pastoral ideal in the urban society. In *American Tragedy,* however, its central event, the murder planned by the hero, Clyde Griffiths -- he plots to kill his pregnant girlfriend, Roberta Alden, to marry his dream girl, rich and sophisticated Sondra Finchley -- takes place in nature. That is to say, in this novel, nature, especially lakes, play an important part in showing the power of urbanization over the realm of nature. It is clear when we think of the fact that Clyde's tragedy, that is Roberta's murder, is based on a real murder committed in nature, a rural lake, in 1906.[1] Before he started on *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser was interested in murders, especially those cases in which the motives of the killers, most of them young men, were sex and success. According to his essay titled "I Find the Real American Tragedy," through those crimes Dreiser learned that there was a fact in the capitalistic society that "almost all youth [wanted] to be a 'somebody' successful financially or socially" (Dreiser 291) and he learned also that if only they had not committed the crime, most of the criminals would have been a "young common man who [lived an] ordinary life following a common sense of value under capitalism" (Dreiser 297). Thus, in actuality, Dreiser writes the tragic story of his protagonist based on the story of a real-life ordinary young American man. On this point, we might say, this novel shows Dreiser's interest in sociological issues. For instance, Hussman points out that this book is a sociological book which "deals with the problem of the self versus the society" (Hussman 126). Walcutt groups *An American Tragedy* into the third stage of "Dreiser's naturalism" and argues that "*An American*

Tragedy is naturalistic because normal social pressure makes Clyde's downfall inevitable" (Walcutt 211). Walcutt also says:

> In Clyde Griffith's [sic] progress, on the contrary, social implications abound. Dreiser had been converted to socialism since writing *The "Genius"*; his American tragedy is a tragedy brought about by the society in which we live. That society is responsible, as the immediate cause, for Clyde's actions. This social consciousness marks the third stage of Dreiser's naturalism. (Walcutt 211)[2]

Thus, Dreiser's sociological point of view and the descriptions of the problem of the self and the society are usually discussed as one of the main themes of *An American Tragedy*.

However, this is not the only issue which Dreiser presents in *An American Tragedy.* Clyde's tragedy represents not only the ambiguous situation of an individual in the urban society but it also represents the ambiguity of the rural town, such as Lycurgus in the suburb of New York, under urbanization. The meaning of the term "rural society," is not exactly the same as the meaning of "country" or "pastoral"; however, in this novel, a rural community, Lycurgus, is depicted as the opposite of the cities, so that I will use the term "rural town" to mean a society in the countryside, and of a place which indicates pastoral elements. By describing the ambiguity of the rural town in this novel Dreiser might show us that the relationship between people in the cities and nature is changing. This becomes evident when we think of the circumstances

in which the tragedy happened. Before he arrives at Lycurgus, Clyde has lived in cities such as Kansas City and Chicago, yet Dreiser does not choose such big cities as the scene of the murder. He has chosen a rural town, Lycurgus, instead. It shows that Dreiser, in collecting information of murders by young men in the actual capitalistic society, was more interested in the fact that those crimes had actually happened not only in the cities but also in nature. In other words, he came to be interested in the relationship between men and nature. In *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser thus reveals his socio-political stance by illustrating not only the problem of the self and the society, but also the problem of men and nature, and the binary of man versus nature is juxtaposed with the binary of the urban environments versus the rural.

There are a few critics who mention Dreiser's interest in ecology in *An American Tragedy*. Cara Alana Erdheim, for instance, takes up Dreiser's essay "The Tippecanoe" (1924) to point out that Dreiser had been interested in the preservation and restoration of Midwestern waters. She says that the essay is significant in thinking about Dreiser's embrace of local environmental advocacy in connection with the descriptions of nature in *An American Tragedy* because the text illustrates the issues of water while Dreiser was drafting the story.[3] She, moreover, argues that "Dreiser exposes the reader to images of unlimited hydration and wealth, only to explode the false notion that access to water is not determined by fortune" through abundant waters present in *An American Tragedy*, and that "Dreiser's writing expresses a critically neglected link between environment and class, illustrating how the socioeconomic segregation of natural spaces of leisure from urban centers of labor converts national myths into American tragic realities" (Erdheim 18). Charles L. Campbell also discusses the images of lakes in this

novel in connection with Clyde's desire for wealth and explores the environmental thematic in *An American Tragedy*. Although they point out Dreiser's interest in urbanization of nature, they discuss mainly the issues of "self" in nature. However, Clyde's story is based on a murder that occurred really at a lake under the pressure of capitalism. We might argue that the self is not the only issue in *An American Tragedy*. By presenting a lake as a scene of the murder planned under the pressure of capitalism, Dreiser emphasizes the fact that nature *can* be a scene for modern crimes. By describing the relation of men and nature/lakes, Dreiser, in short, depicts the modernization of nature and shows the power of urbanization over the society in the countryside.

Furthermore, by describing lakes as socially segregated places, Dreiser reveals not only the transformation of the society outside cities but also the still surviving rural traditions there. While Dreiser gives Clyde a position as a distinguished factory owner's nephew, he does not allow him to join entirely in lavish and leisurely social gatherings at Lycurgus's luxurious lakesides. Those luxurious lakes make Clyde eager to get access there. He aspires to appropriate nature as the upper classes do; however, he realizes that the lakes he could get access to are different from those which the upper classes could get access to. This fact shows that although lakes seemingly create the mirage of unlimited water available to all, its natural resources in actuality are available only to a select few.

In *An American Tragedy*, by thus setting the story in nature, especially lakes in the countryside, Dreiser describes both modernization of nature and unchangeable social class in the rural society. This two-sidedness of the rural community is presented as one of the significant issues of this novel.

2. Lakes and Changing Values toward Nature – Big Bittern and Walden –

With the appearance of consumer society at the turn of the century, people were interested in how to spend their leisure time, and this tendency brought the development of the entertainment industry and urbanization of nature in the suburbs. The lifestyle of the people, especially of the youth, was affected by the development of leisure, and it changed the value of nature for people in the cities. The transition of the value of nature can be seen in *An American Tragedy*, too, in the descriptions of the relationship between people in Lycurgus and lakes. As Thorstein Veblen gives farsighted discussion in his book in 1899, in the industrial communities in the late nineteenth century, the mechanical contrivances available for the comfort and convenience of everyday life were highly developed. Upper classes tended to be interested in showing their possession of wealth, and how to spend their leisure time became one of the big issues for them (Veblen 1-51, 155-200). Meanwhile, industrialization brought a rise in the number of young laborers and allowed them to have their leisure time. Those who stayed in a lower class tried to imitate the people in the wealthy leisure classes. This tendency brought the growth of the leisure industry not only in the urban society but also in the rural society. Besides this, the development of leisure changed the meaning of nature for the people in the cities and brought the modernization of nature. Amusement parks, which were created as a commercial spaces for people's recreation, might be an appropriate example of the industrialization of nature. America's first modern amusement park, Paul Boyton's Water Chute, was

opened by a swimmer and showman, Paul Boyton, in the world's first Midway at World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.[4] Under urbanization, the development of leisure business made people notice nature's potential as a place for leisure, and changed the value of nature for people. This is reflected in the change in the depictions of nature in American literature at the turn of the century, too. Earlier, in *"Walden,"* for example, Henry David Thoreau described the lake as a mystical space segregated from the secular world and appreciated nature as a pastoral ideal. In *An American Tragedy*, however, Dreiser describes lakes not as a mystical space but as an amusement space for young people. In this book, he presents lakes in connection with Clyde's struggle to live in the secularized world. Clyde's desire for the higher status of the leisure class is shown through the descriptions of the relationship between Clyde and nature/ lakes. Lakes play an important part in this novel, in showing the changing values of nature.

To explore the idea that lakes represent changing values toward nature in *An American Tragedy*, I would like first to look at the description of the lake Big Bittern in particular. Big Bittern is the lake where Clyde commits the murder of Roberta, and it is described in great detail through the eyes of Clyde. Charles L.Campbell points out in his essay that "to understand Dreiser's vision of nature in *An American Tragedy*, we must understand Henry David Thoreau's first, for Dreiser writes in conscious relation to Thoreau's vision of life in the wood" (Campbell 252). Indeed there are some similarities between Dreiser's description of Big Bittern and Thoreau's description of Walden; the fact that Dreiser willingly edited and wrote the "Introduction" to *The Living Thoughts of Thoreau* (1933) indicates that Dreiser was interested in the vision Thoreau presented in *Walden.* In the "Introduction," Dreiser mentions Thoreau's experimental life beside the

lake in Concord, and claims that Thoreau's idealistic vision of nature is a kind of unrealistic dream in modern society while he appreciates Thoreau as a philosopher who opens up the optimistic idea of transcendentalism (Dreiser 1-27). [5] This view of Dreiser means that while Dreiser agrees with Thoreau's vision, in part, he understands the fact that the idea presented in *Walden* is not always suitable to the capitalistic society at the turn of the century. Such an opinion about *Walden* is presented in the descriptions of lakes, especially of Big Bittern, in *An American Tragedy*. Dreiser presents Big Bittern, which reminds us of *Walden*, as a scene of the tragedy in the modern world. In so doing, Dreiser suggests a difference in the values of nature for people in the middle of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, and shows us the image of a secularization of nature.

To demonstrate how Big Bittern plays a part in showing the changes in the value of nature, I would like to examine Dreiser's description of Big Bittern first in comparison with the description of Walden. [6] There are some similarities and differences. First of all, in the geographical point, they are both a part of a "Chain of small ponds" (*Walden* 133; *American Tragedy* 458),[7] and are described as a "walled-in lake" (*W* 126) or "wood land lake" (*AT* 458) which is surrounded by hills or "walls of pines."[8] Furthermore, there are similarities in the descriptions of the lakes themselves. For example, in *Walden,* Thoreau describes the lake's surface as "the glassy surface of a lake […] like molten glass" (*W* 128), and in *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser likewise describes the lake's surface as the "quiet, glassy, iridescent surface of the lake […] like molten glass" (485). They are both likened to something related to the image of "glass" such as "crystal" or a "mirror" (*W* 136; *AT* 490). However, while "glass" reflects the

beauty of nature in *Walden*, in *An American Tragedy*, the "glass" reflects a crime committed by a young man who desires a better life. Dreiser writes: "what was that moving about in this crystal? […] Death! Murder!"(*AT* 490), while Thoreau writes: "Walden is a perfect forest mirror" (*W* 129).

In terms of the symbols for nature, "fish" and the "cry of birds" are also described in both books.[9] For instance, in *Walden*, "fish" are described as something "mysterious" (*W*120) which "is named by god" (*W*120) and "fishing" is for the "next day dinner" (*W*120). By contrast, in *An American Tragedy*, "fishing" is described as an object of men's leisure, as Dreiser writes, "[Harley Baggott] was interested to learn more about the fishing possibilities of this lake in behalf of his father" (*AT* 459). The same things can be said about the "cry of birds." In *Walden*, the "cry of birds" allows Thoreau to rediscover himself, and Thoreau describes birds as a symbol of "spirits," using the expression "spirits of fallen souls" (113). On the other hand, in *An American Tragedy*, a "cry of birds" urges Clyde to commit a crime, and Dreiser describes birds as a symbol for death: "[…] what was it sounding – a warning – a protest – condemnation? The same bird that had marked the very birth of this miserable plan" (*AT* 490). While nature is described in connection with something mysterious in *Walden*, nature in *An American Tragedy* is described in connection with men's desire for a better life in the secular world.

Furthermore, in the books Thoreau and Clyde both have great interest in the lake. Thoreau thinks of Walden as "the landscape's most beautiful expressive feature" (*W* 128), and Clyde is also strongly interested in Big Bittern, as shown in the sentence: "the nature of the lake country around the Big-Bittern had been interesting

him more than any other geography of the world" (*AT* 475). However, while Thoreau voices the reason of going to the lake as "I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of live" (*W* 66), the reason of going to the lake for Clyde is to murder Roberta who would be an obstruction to his plan for a better life. We can see here again that nature in *An American Tragedy* is displayed in association with men's desire for a better life while nature in *Walden* is displayed in association with something mysterious. In a chapter titled "The Pond" in *Walden*, Thoreau says that nature is "too pure to have a market" (*W* 137). However, in *An American Tragedy*, such nature becomes a scene of a murder in the modern world. While Big Bittern reminds us of Walden, it shows us the secularization of nature at the same time.

3. Lakes and the Power of Urbanization over the Rural Community

We can see the modernized nature more clearly when we examine how Dreiser describes the lakes and the relation of men and lakes in the rural town. In *An American Tragedy*, lakes are presented mainly as leisure spaces for young people and this fact indicates the modernization of nature at the turn of the century.[10] In addition, if lakes play a big part in giving people in the society outside cities an opportunity to enjoy their leisure time, it can be said that, in this book, lakes represent also the power of urbanization over the society in the countryside.

In this book, first of all, lakes are presented as a leisure space for upper-class people in the rural community, Lycurgus; the Griffiths family likes to spend their week-ends at Greenwood Lake, which is a summer resort for society life of the region,

and the youth of the upper-class enjoy their leisure time in lake-side resorts. The following is a passage from a letter from Sondra Finchley, who is a daughter of a rich family in Lycurgus and is staying at Twelfth Lake for summer vacation, to Clyde, who is working at the factory in town:

> It's just glorious up here. Lots of people already here and more coming every day. The Casino and golf course over at Pine Point are open and lots of people about. I can hear Stuart and Grant with their launches going up toward Gray's Inlet now. You must hurry and come up, dear. It's too nice for words. Green roads to gallop through, and swimming and dancing at the Casino every afternoon at four. […] We'd ride and drive and swim and dance. (433)

We can see here that the name of the lake "Pine Point" is presented as one of amusement facilities in which young people can enjoy dancing and swimming. The youths of the upper-class, including Sondra, also enjoy going on an excursion to "better" lake resorts for their leisure time just "to have fun and make love" (538). The members of the youth who eagerly enjoy their leisure time here are, however, only children of the "newer and faster set" families such as the Cranstons and the Finchleys, "who [have] moved their companies from Albany or Buffalo, and built large factories on the south bank of the Mohawk River, to say nothing of new and grandiose houses in Wykeagy Avenue" (149). They are "given to wearing the smartest clothes, to the latest novelties in cars and entertainments" (149), and "are in the main a thorn in the flesh of

the remainder of the elite of Lycurgus – too showy and too aggressive" (149). For those who are recognized as the "faster set," lakes are important not only as leisure spaces but also as an indicator of their status in the society. For example, Bella, a daughter of the Griffiths, who are a representative family of the "old-set, elite Lycurgus," talks about the Finchleys to her father:

> "They [the Finchleys] are going to give up the place at Greenwood and build a big handsome bungalow up on Twelfth Lake right away. And Mr. Finchley's going to buy a big electric launch for Stuart and they are going to live up there next summer."(154)
>
> [Mr.Griffiths] was interested at the moment not so much by the thought that she wished to convey – that Twelfth Lake was more desirable, socially than Greenwood – as he was by the fact that the Finchleys were able to make this sudden and rather heavy expenditure for social reasons only. (155)

Here the names of lakes are used not only as leisure space, but also as an indication of social status. Considering the reason for the Finchley's moving, that Twelfth Lake is more socially desirable than Greenwood, it would be possible to say that the lakes are presented as indicators of wealth and class in the local society. In short, lakes, which were a part of a sacred nature outside the cities, are now associated with the transitions of the structure of the rural community under urbanization.[11]

The people who want to spend their leisure time at lakes are not only those who

are in the upper-class. The youth in the working-classes also want to spend their leisure time at lake-side resorts. In *An American Tragedy*, Clyde spends his weekends, without exception, at Crum Lake:

> [O]n Saturday afternoons and Sundays, making idle sightseeing trips to Gloversville, Fonda, Amsterdam and other places, as well as Gray and Crum Lakes, where there were boats, beaches, and bathhouses, with bathing suits for rent. […] And so his [Clyde's] mind indulged itself in day dreams as to how it would feel to be a member of one of the wealthy groups that frequented the more noted resorts of the north – Racquette Lake – Schroon Lake – Lake George and Champlain – dance, golf, tennis, canoe with those who could afford to go to such places – the rich of Lycurgus. (255)

Here again, the names of lakes mean leisure facilities, and they also indicate the difference of classes in the local society. They show Clyde that his social position is different from that of the wealthy group, and stimulate his desire to join the upper classes. The lakes often play the role of spurring Clyde's desire to join the group. When he receives the letter from Sondra in Pine Point, for instance, Clyde notices the postmark says "Twelfth Lake" and wonders about the luxurious life there: "Sondra! And the great estate that she had described, lying along the west shore of Twelfth Lake" (438). "Twelfth Lake" is used as the representation of the upper-class life and of Sondra herself. Clyde then longs to go to "Twelfth Lake" to meet Sondra as soon as possible although he has a trouble with pregnant Roberta.

Before Clyde knows Sondra very well, he wishes to have a girlfriend and thinks of Roberta rowing his canoe at Crum Lake:

> [H]e could see how he could be very happy with her if only he did not need to marry her. […] If only he might venture to talk to her more – to walk home with her some day from the mill – to bring her out here to this lake on a Saturday or Sunday, and row about – just to idle and dream with her. (258)

Clyde sees Roberta in actuality at the lake soon after that, and falls in love with her successfully. Here, the lake gives Clyde an opportunity to temporarily satisfy his desire to have a girlfriend, and makes him feel that "life [gave] him all" (275). Lakes thus give Clyde a chance to enjoy his leisure time on one hand, and induce or satisfy his desire for a better life on the other hand.

Clyde's desire to have a better life can be seen when he was a bellboy at a large hotel in Kansas City too. When he was working at the hotel, for example, he saw young fellows and girls in a room laughing and talking and drinking, and thought that "this sight was like looking through the gates of Paradise" (46). In addition, during his first visit to a brothel with other bellboys, Clyde felt that he had "won" a "new source of pleasure" (70) and then he desired to have his own sophisticated girl. Thus, in the city scene, the things associated with urbanization, such as hotels and brothels, play a role in making people want to have a better life. Dreiser describes lakes in the suburb in the same way as he describes hotels and brothels in the city-scene. We can see that lakes are displayed as a part of leisure under industrialization. It represents the secularization of

nature, and we can see the influence of urbanization upon nature in the suburbs.

4. Lakes and Still Surviving Rural Order

The secularization of nature, as we have seen, is represented in the descriptions of lakes in *An American Tragedy*, and at the same time, we can see the disappearing border between the space of nature and the secular urban world. Yet, the disappearance of the border simultaneously emphasizes the presence of another border: the border between the classes in the local society. This is evident when we see the scene at Crum Lake in which Clyde longs to be a member of the upper-class. Here, as we have seen, the names of lakes are presented as indicators of differences in class. The closer the relations of men and the secular world become, the more differences in class there stand out. The lakes in this novel play an important role in not only showing the disappearance of the border between nature and the secular world, but also of emphasizing the border between classes in the local society.

The immovable image of lakes plays a part in showing the unchanged order, the class distinction in the rural community. In Dreiser's novels, the images of rivers are often used as symbols for a "change."[12] In the first chapter of *An American Tragedy*, for instance, when he goes on the first excursion with his friends by car, Clyde is fascinated with the idea of "distant travel" from his ordinary routine (124), seeing the flow of the river through the window. The mobility of the river implies Clyde's desire to move to another place and upward mobility. Unlike the river, however, lakes have an immobile and monotonous image. Dreiser uses such images of lakes to express the situation of the murder and Clyde's depressed feelings. In addition, Dreiser shows the

fact that there is a class distinction in the society of Lycurgus by using the stationary images of lakes. The immobility of lakes, in other words, represents the unchangeable border between the classes. After the murder at Big Bittern, Clyde goes to Twelfth Lake and finally has an opportunity to spend his leisure time with upper class people, including Sondra. However, in spite of staying at Twelfth Lake, his mind is caught by Big Bittern:

> And so although after the lunch there was swimming and dancing, then a return to the Cranstons with Harley Baggott and Bertine […] still his [Clyde's] mind was on the business of getting these papers at the first possible opportunity. (538)

Clyde here isn't allowed to enjoy his leisure time at Twelfth Lake even though he is there. His consciousness is forced to turn to Big Bittern. Big Bittern prevents him from moving to other places and Twelfth Lake cannot be a leisure space for Clyde. This fixed image of the relationship of Clyde and Big Bittern can be seen also in the scene of an interrogation at the end of the story. Under interrogation, although Mason, a judge, hopes for a confession, Clyde remains silent because he is convinced that "any admission in connection with Roberta or Big Bittern [spells] ruin" (562). Just as Clyde thinks of Sondra together with Twelfth Lake and dreams of a better life, he thinks of Roberta together with Big Bittern and fears a worse life. While Twelfth Lake is described as an indication of upper classes, Big Bittern is described as an indication of poor working classes. Those images are fixed for the entire society of Lycurgus,

including the "fast set," such as the Finchleys. The conventional social order in the society outside cities has an influence on even the people from the urban area. In *An American Tragedy*, the immobility of lakes thus represents the still surviving unchangeable and influential class distinction.

The murder, moreover, appears in a local newspaper article titled "Lake Tragedy" (630). In the article, the upper classes are called "those of Lycurgus or Twelfth Lake" (635), and are distinguished from others including Clyde. Lakes are here used as a symbol for the difference in the classes in the local community, and are associated with the secular world by the newspaper. Thus, in *An American Tragedy*, the descriptions of lakes reveal the border between the classes while they represent the disappearance of the border between nature and the world. By showing the inconsistent descriptions of lakes, Dreiser suggests the conflicts between the new urban sense of value and the traditional rural order in local society under urbanization. Furthermore, regarding how the Griffiths and the Finchleys take action after the tragedy, Dreiser writes:

> [I]t was decided that at once, and without explanation or apology to any one, Mrs Finchley, Stuart and Sondra should leave for the Maine coast or any place satisfactory to them, Finchley himself proposed to return to Lycurgus and Albany. […] [T]he Cranstons to one of the Thousand Islands, where there was a summer colony not entirely unsatisfactory to their fancy. (581-2)

Unlike Clyde and Roberta, who lose the possibility to move to different places and are

forced to end up at Big Bittern, those who are in the upper class are allowed to move to other places and to have an acceptable life. Lakes are, here again, used as an indicator of class differences in the local society of Lycurgus; they reveal that there are still surviving borders between the classes.

5. Conclusion

Thus, in *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser turns his attention away from the urban-pastoral ideal in *the city* toward the ideal in *the space of nature*. By depicting natural spaces, especially lakes, which were recognized as mystical spaces, as places where the city people enjoy their leisure time, and where the modern murder could happen, Dreiser shows the secularization of nature and reveals the invasion of urban values upon the pastoral ideal. In *An American Tragedy*, he demonstrates the difficulties of achieving urban-pastoral harmony by describing the complicated human relationship and social problems in the rural town under urbanization. In short, Dreiser depicts the effects of urbanization upon the American society more forcefully by demonstrating the reality of secularization of nature. In describing the urbanization of nature and showing the problems in the rural town under urbanization through the descriptions of the relationship between men and nature, and demonstrating the complicated human relationship in the local society under urbanization, Dreiser, who shown the affirmative or equivocal views of the harmonious relationship between the country and the city, shows his now negative view of the relationship.

In addition, in thinking of the changing value of nature, we might argue,

Dreiser also notices the two-sided images of lakes: of their potentiality as modern leisure facilities and of their immobility. By describing the secularization of nature using such images of lakes, he reveals both the changing relationship between men and nature in the rural areas and the unchangeable social order there, and shows us the problems of struggling and changing rural society. The lakes play a role in both showing the disappearance of the border between nature and the urban world, and emphasizing a still remaining border between the classes in the society outside the cities. In short, two seemingly inconsistent problems in the rural community at the turn of the century are suggested by the description of two-sided images of the lakes in *An American Tragedy*. In so thinking, we can conclude that by setting the scene of the story in nature and showing the impossibility of achieving a harmonious relationship between two senses of value, Dreiser shows his now more skeptical view of the urban-pastoral ideal. On that point, we might say, this novel shows Dreiser's relatively negative viewpoints of urban-pastoral harmony.

Notes

[1] The source of Clyde's tragedy is the Chester Gillette case of 1906. Gillette had drowned his pregnant girlfriend, Grace Brown. Unlike Clyde, Gillette was an experienced man who was educated in a college and had traveled abroad. By describing Clyde as a naturally poor man unlike Gillette, Dreiser makes the image of his young hero more typical of young American men in a capitalistic society (*A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia*).

[2] Leonard Cassuto also mentions the sociological aspect of this novel by focusing on Dreiser's interest in actual crimes (Cassuto 200).

[3] "The Tippecanoe" was written in 1924, one year before *An American Tragedy*, and it departed from much of Dreiser's nonfiction by showing an interest in the preservation of waters. In the essay, Dreiser voiced his gratitude for the local government's decisions to protect an Indiana waterway and to preserve those natural sources of hydration that this river brought to the state. See Erdheim (5-7).

[4] See "Amusement Parks," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. According to this, it was the first charged amusement facility in America. The idea of the conglomeration of attractions in the realm of nature attracted people in the cities and became the template used for amusement parks for the next half-century. After his success in Chicago, Boyton opened a second park at Coney Island, New York, in 1895, initiating the rise of amusement parks at Coney and throughout America (Amusement park, Encyclopedia of Chicago).

[5] Of Dreiser's interest in the idea of transcendentalism, Roger Asselineau points out that Dreiser also wrote the introduction to *Living Thoughts of Emerson* (99). See also Hakutani (xxvi).

[6] Although Champbell also writes about the similarities between the descriptions of the two lakes, he does not write more than about Dreiser's interest in the idea of transcendentalism, and does not write about the differences. I would like to examine the change in the value of nature by examining both the similarities and the differences in the description of lakes in *An American Tragedy* and *Walden*.

[7] In this chapter, I use *W* for *Walden*, and *AT* for *An American Tragedy*.

[8] The actual model of Big Bittern is Big Moose in which the murder by Gillette Brown happened.

[9] The birds which lead Thoreau to self-recovery in *Walden* are usually loons. In *An American Tragedy*, the birds which frighten Clyde in the woods are those called "Wier-wier." There is no article on "Wier-wier" in *The Encyclopedia of Birds*; however, because of their similarities I will consider them the same kind.

[10] As Erdheim says, eco-critics sometimes distinguish between space and places. Some critics define place as that which someone or something inhabits physically, and define space as that which is more of a geographical body. I do acknowledge the differences; however, since I would like to distinguish between nature and the secularized world in this chapter, I use these terms interchangeably.

[11] Although Twelfth Lake is fictional, such as Raquatte Lake, Champaign Lake, and Lake George, are actual lakes and each is part of the Adirondack Park in the north of the New York state. Since Big Bittern is in the Adirondacks (*AT* 543), Dreiser might describe the lakes in this novel based on the lakes in the Adirondacks. The Adirondacks in actuality was a popular place for upper-class people to spend their leisure time at the beginning of the twentieth century. (Adirondack Park Agency Web).

[12] In *Sister Carrie,* for instance, Dreiser compares the instability of the urban life to the flow of the New York River (214).

Chapter Ⅵ *The Bulwark*: The Disappearing Pastoral Ideal —"The Spirit of the Times" versus "the Spirit of the Barnes Home"

1. Introduction

Although Dreiser has been recognized as a representative of American city novelists, in his four earlier novels, he depicts the existence of the pastoral ideals in the city and presents his affirmative or equivocal view of urban-pastoral harmony in describing the complicated relationship between urban values and the pastoral ideal in cities. In *An American Tragedy*, however, he demonstrates the strong influence of urbanization over nature and shows a more negative view of urban-pastoral harmony in describing the reality of a rural town under urbanization. In his final novel, *The Bulwark*, which was published about twenty-five years after *An American Tragedy*, he again describes the firm influence of urbanization upon American society, and clearly shows his dismissive view of the complementary relationship between the urban and the pastoral. If we carefully examine the description of the religious protagonist, Solon

Barnes in the context of the issue of the urban-pastoral relationship, we can see that Dreiser depicts the power of urbanization in this book by describing the powerlessness of faith or meaninglessness of traditional values, and also we can understand this book as an advanced work which shows the reality of urban society; that can be understood as "Dreiserian naturalism." In this chapter, I will first explore how Dreiser describes the reality of the society under urbanization in connection with Solon's religious spirit. Then I will examine his dismissive attitude toward the pastoral ideal and urban-pastoral harmony in this novel.

Since *The Bulwark* was posthumously published in 1946, many critics and reviewers have recognized this novel as a melancholic work which shows Dreiser's weakened spirit and conservative point of view in his last years. For instance, soon after it was published, F.O. Mathiessen, in *The New York Times Book Review*, described *The Bulwark* as "just a religious novel about Solon's rediscovery of Christian love," and pointed out that it shows Dreiser's conservative and mystical view of life in his last years (1, 42). The religious description of Solon and the apparently mythical ending of the story have caused critical discussion and disagreement. Charles Child Walcutt groups *The Bulwark* with *The Stoic* into the "last stage of Dreiser's naturalism" in

which naturalism is no longer "Dreiserian naturalism."[1] He refers specifically to the ways in which the notion of religious spirit is used in the story:

> Thus the fourth stage of Dreiser's naturalism is not naturalism, after all, and it is indeed most instructive to see how easily the style, the method, and the attitudes of the early Dreiser are entirely converted in these final novels to the uses of Authority and Spirit. Having brooded long and sadly over the materialist's world, he turns away from it at the end without greatly changing his tone. (Walcutt 221)

Donald Pizer also points out Solon's religious faith and the religious ending of this novel, and reads this story as a "mystical one" imbued with a transcendental hope which is untypical of Dreiser (Pizer 325). Barbara Hochman, too, argues that Solon's final understanding of god in the woods "is part of a new openness, a new acceptance of life's multifaceted reality" (Hochman 8). Sidney Richman also contends that *The Bulwark* "in content and tone sits squarely in the transcendental tradition – owing nothing at all to Herbert Spencer and everything to Thoreau and John Woolman"

(Richman 229). Of Dreiser's transcendentalism, Pizer writes in his article that "most critics who have written since the seminal essay by Eliseo Vivas in 1938 have recognized that many different strains appear in Dreiser's fictions and that some of these strains – his mysticism and transcendentalism, or his prophetic tone – are antithetical to the biological and environmental determinism and amoral objectivity of a conventionally conceived naturalist." [2] Indeed, today, most critics tend to accept these complexities in Dreiser. In terms of Dreiser's transcendental view of life suggested in *The Bulwark*, for example, Richard Lehan states that Dreiser is "showing Spencer's realm of antithetical force being absorbed – contradictions and all – within Thoreau's over-soul – that is, on a transcendent level of beauty and order" (Lehan 233). More recently, Stephen Brennan suggests that *The Bulwark* is ultimately melancholic rather than uplifting (Brennan 22). Thus, many critics have read *The Bulwark* as a melancholy novel which is untypical of Dreiser's fictions. Unlike those interpretations, however, Laurence Hussman claims in his book that *The Bulwark* is Dreiser's "most misunderstood book and it remains his most undervalued" (Hussman 153). According to Hussman, *The Bulwark* is "not just a melancholy [book], but contains the message of tested faith and resolute optimism" and "both the matter and the manner of *The Bulwark*

are markedly different" from those in his earlier books (Hussman 153). Hussman also argues that *The Bulwark* contains Dreiser's impatience with manners in a capitalistic society and his own belief in life's ultimate meaning, and points out that it shows us Dreiser's rather conventional view of life in his last years.

I would like to argue, however, that reading *The Bulwark* as a book which shows Dreiser's conventional ideas *is* a misinterpretation of this book. When we carefully examine how Dreiser uses the image of religion in this story, it will become clear that the binary opposition of urban values and the pastoral ideal is suggested in *The Bulwark*, too, and in this novel, the opposition is represented through the conflict between the new urban sense of value in the world and the traditional religious sense of value in the protagonist's home. In this novel, Solon's traditional way of thinking based on his religious nature is displayed in opposition to the new sense of value in the society under urbanization and Solon's nature-worship is shown in opposition to the bustle of the urbanized society. In short, in this novel, the religious Solon shows us an element of the pastoral. This becomes clear when we see the final garden scene in this novel. There, Solon, who has given up living in the secular world, notices and appreciates the beauty of nature, and worships the god in nature. In this scene, the beauty of nature and religion

are linked together by Solon's religious perspective. The elements of the pastoral ideal are shown in Solon here. Furthermore, in this novel, Solon's religious nature causes the conflict between his way of thinking and the urban sense of value, which is represented by people around him such as his children, and it allegorically shows the problem of the urban-pastoral relationship in American society.

As many critics point out, religion is one of the most prominent themes of *The Bulwark*. Dreiser began working on this novel in 1914, after a young Quaker woman told Dreiser a tragic story about her religious family. Because of its religious theme, it took over thirty years before the book actually appeared, and this novel has been recognized as a departure from Dreiser's earlier works in that it shows his positive attitude to religion, especially Quakerism. *The Bulwark* is about the story of three generations of a Quaker family and shows their struggle to harmonize their faith with capitalism, economic gain, and social change. The story is constructed through three main parts. It opens with Solon's wedding ceremony in the Friends' meetinghouse at Dukla, Pennsylvania. "Part One" focuses on Solon's satisfied relationship with his Quaker parents, and his romantic relationship with his future wife, Benecia Wallin. "Part Two" documents Solon's rise in the bank business, and his peaceful life with

Benecia and five children. In “Part Three,” however, Solon faces a serious gap in his relationship with his children. Through the complicated relationship with his children, he meets difficulty in keeping his religious lessons in his home, and faces the reality of the changing world. Solon questions the limits of his faith and idealism, and then decides to go into the woods. His attempt to rediscover a self appears in garden scenes near the end of the story. One day, he observes “an exquisitely colored and designed fly” eating a bud and he has a “conversation” with a snake (316-9), and this experience leads Solon to conclude that “good intent is itself a universal language” (319). As the novel comes to its conclusion, Solon renews his belief in the presence of an absolute god and the beauty of nature. He decides to retire from the world to spend the rest of his life in the woods. Although Dreiser describes Solon as a religiously devout parent and as inadequate in the world, in this conclusion, he does not describe Solon as an utter failure in the secularized society as he did with the fathers of Jennie and Clyde. With this more complicated and ambiguous description of his religious hero in *The Bulwark*, this novel might be considered as one showing Dreiser’s affirmative ideas on religion, and it could be said that it is untypical of Dreiser.

However, when we carefully look at the scene of Solon’s rediscovery of self in

the conclusion and look at how his religious nature is suggested in the story, we may notice that Solon's struggle to get along with his children and with the people in the urban society symbolically show the conflict between the pastoral ideal and urban values. We then may notice that this book is not untypical of Dreiser. In this novel too, the problem of the urban-pastoral relation is suggested. The spirit of Solon based on his religious nature is presented in opposition to the spirit of the times. Solon's rediscovery of self in the conclusion shows a rediscovery of his religious nature at the same time, and it occurs in the woods. Considering Marx's discussion of American pastoralism, in which Marx points out that, as a fact of pastoralism, the main characters tend to connect the recovery of nature with their rediscovery of selves in the work of the American classic writers, we could understand Solon's rediscovery of self here as his attempt to connect the self, the religious nature, with nature itself. However, in the conclusion of the story, Dreiser describes the failure of Solon's attempt. In so doing, he puts an emphasis on the power of the spirits of the urban world over the spirits of Solon, that is, the pastoral ideal. In short, Dreiser's dismissive view of the pastoral ideal and urban-pastoral harmony is suggested in the final garden scenes.

The conflict between the spirit of the Barnes home and the spirit of the time is

displayed in the descriptions of a capitalistic influence upon Solon's traditional sense of value throughout the story, too. This book was first written against the background of American society early in the twentieth century, as were his earlier published works. Throughout the story the capitalistic influence is invariably seen in Solon's life, but there is an unmistakable factor which plays a crucial role in communicating the spirit of the times to Solon and his children: the middle-aged women Aunt Hester and Rhoda. Dreiser had tended to depict middle-aged characters as representatives of the conservative/religious sense of value in his earlier published works. In *The Bulwark*, however, the middle-aged women play an important role in giving a chance to Solon's children to release themselves from "the spirit of the Barnes home" based on Solon's religious nature. They present images of advanced women who play a role of telling the "spirit of the time" to the young generation. While almost all women in Dreiser's works including Rhoda are described as women who can be sexual objects for men, the description of Aunt Hester is somehow different. She reminds us of the image of the women activists who opened the world for the young generation. By reading this novel with due consideration of the function of Aunt Hester, it becomes clear that the conflict between urban values and the pastoral ideal is epitomized in the troubling relationship

between the spirit of the times and the spirit of the Barnes home, and that the strong power of "the spirit of the times," that is the urban sense of value, upon "the spirit of the Barnes home," that is the pastoral ideal, is suggested by the author throughout the story.

Although the conclusion of the story seemingly indicates Dreiser's weakened spirit and a conservative point of view, when we carefully see how the urban-pastoral relationship is symbolically shown in a conflict of the spirit of the time and the spirit of the Barnes home, and see how the influence of urban values upon Solon's life is displayed in the description of Aunt Hester, it should be possible to state that *The Bulwark*, far from being a conservative work of an aging writer's last years, is an advanced piece showing the power of urbanization and reflecting Dreiser's relatively negative view of urban pastoral harmony.

2. The Urban-Pastoral Relationship through "the Spirit of the Times" versus "the Spirit of the Barnes Home"

The issue of religion has been suggested in connection with the conflicts between urban values and the pastoral ideal in Dreiser's other novels, too. In Dreiser's

books, a religious sense of value is often out of harmony with the urban values, and religion has been used as a way to oppose the urban/new sense of value, and as an indicator of the powerlessness of the pastoral ideal against the urban sense of value. In *Jennie Gerhardt*, for instance, the one who opposes Lester's urban supremacies is Jennie's father, Mr. Gerhardt, a bigoted religious man:

> His [Mr. Gerhardt's] Lutheran proclivities had been strengthened by years of church-going and the religious observances of home life.
>
> Naturally, such a deep religious feeling made him stern with his children. He was prone to scan with a narrow eye the pleasures and foibles of youthful desire. Jennie was never to have a lover if her father had any voice in the matter. (*Jennie* 33-34)

In spite of his opposing attitude toward Jennie's lover, who represents the urban sense of value, Mr. Gerhardt eventually receives Lester's assistance in his last years. Yet, Mr. Gerhardt obstinately claims his sense of value. The following is the description of Mr. Gerhardts's behavior when he starts living with Jennie and Lester in the Hyde Park

home in Chicago:

> [Gerhardt,] at once, bestirred himself about the labours which he felt instinctively concerned him. He took charge of the furnace and the yard, outraged at the thought that good money should be paid to any outsider when he had nothing to do. The trees, he declared to Jennie, were in a dreadful condition. If Lester would get him a pruning knife and a saw he would attend to them in the spring. […] He found a Lutheran Church almost two miles away. […] And nothing would do but that Vesta must go to church with him regularly. (*J* 152)

Thus, even when he is in the city, Mr.Gerhardt disagrees with the urban values, such as paying money to take care of nature, and is concerned about the church. His sense of value, which opposes the urban sense of value, is repeatedly shown in the descriptions of his life with Lester in Chicago:

> Again, Lester's expensive clothes, which he carelessly threw aside after

> a few month's use, were a source of woe to the thrifty old German. (*J* 157)
>
> So far as his own meagre store of money was concerned, he gave the most of it to his beloved church, where he was considered to be a model of propriety, honesty, faith – in fact, the embodiment of all the virtues. (*J* 158)

Thus, the traditional sense of value presented by the religious old man is suggested in opposition to the new sense of value presented by a city dweller, Lester. In *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser depicts religion together with the image of the pastoral elements, and by putting Mr. Gerhardt in a weak position in the world, he shows the powerlessness of the pastoral ideal against the urban values in the cities.

As another example, in *An American Tragedy*, religion is obviously displayed as an idea unfit for city life. In this novel, as I discussed in chapter Ⅴ, Clyde represents the urbanizing society, and the one who opposes his longing for a jolly urban life is his father, Asa Griffiths. At the beginning of the story, Mr. Griffiths is portrayed as "a man of about fifty, short, stout, with bushy hair protruding from under a round black felt hat, a most unimportant-looking person" *(AT* 7) and "one of those poorly integrated and correlated organisms, the product of an environment and religious theory, but with no

guiding or mental insight of his own, yet sensitive and therefore highly emotional and without any practical sense whatsoever" (*AT* 13). The image of the Griffiths family, as well as that of the father, is unfit for the gigantic city scene in which the handsome automobiles speed away and the gaudily dressed pedestrians loiter around. Mr. Griffiths's religious nature prevents his family from being successful in the cities. In *An American Tragedy* too, poverty and the simplicity are linked to religiousness. Thus, the characters who have opposite ideas to the urban sense of value in Dreiser's works are usually excluded from the urban world because of their religious nature. Besides, those who claim their religious view of life and oppose the new sense of value are usually elderly persons, such as the protagonist's parents. Religion is linked to images of the past and to the traditional sense of value in Dreiser's fictions. Dreiser, we might say, has written the idea of religion in association with the pastoral ideal and has adopted it to show the weak position of the traditional pastoral ideal in relation to the new urban values.

Needless to say, this image of religion is suggested in *The Bulwark*, too. Here I will first demonstrate how Solon's religious nature is suggested in opposition to urban values and causes the conflict between two senses of value. Then, I will read the

dichotomy of urban values and the pastoral ideal in *The Bulwark* in the relationship between the spirit of the times and the spirit of the Barnes home. When we look at the description of the cleavage between the generations, Solon and his children, it becomes clear that what causes the conflict is Solon's conventional sense of value based on Quaker dogma:

> The Barnes children, although unwittingly enough at first, were becoming, as they grew older, more and more of a problem, for each one in turn could not help being confronted by the marked contrast between the spirit of the Barnes home and that of the world at large. In spite of the many admirable qualities of the home, these were distinctly at variance with the rush and swing and the spirit of the time itself, and this fact could scarcely fail to impress even the least impressionable minds. (138; underline added)

Dreiser mentions here clearly that the spirit of the Barnes home, which is formed by Solon's conservative and religious ideals, is incompatible with the spirit of the times, with its advanced and urbanized sense of value, and that the children therefore become

doubtful of their father's idealism. Solon and Benecia have five children in ten years, born at two-year intervals; this shows simultaneously the change of the times. The story is set in the early twentieth century when American society faced significant changes in many aspects, and the changes had most influenced the younger generations. As Aunt Hester remarks to Solon later in the novel, "Young people are not like they were twenty years ago" (144), and Solon's traditional way of thinking is no longer accepted by the young generation's new way of thinking.

Of the manner of the young people in the early twentieth century, Howard P. Chudacoff explains:

> The late nineteenth century certainly marked a time when American cities began to harbor myriad leisure-time diversions, many of which tempted and filled the everyday lives and leisure time of young, independent men and women. Historians have equated this period with the rise of commercial amusements such as dance halls, spectator and participation sports, amusement parks, vaudeville, saloons, theaters, popular literature, sensational journalism, social clubs, pool halls, red-light vice districts,

> cafes, and cabarets, and many more that occupied the time of young urban adults who had newfound spendable incomes. (Chudacoff 67; underline added)

The diversions which Chudacoff mentions here are, we might say, icons of the urban life and they often appear in *The Bulwark*, too, as icons of the spirit of the times which influence the Barnes's children. Solon, however, objects to all such pleasurable things and has a critical and bigoted opinion of them. He is "extremely dubious" of all those pleasures and "would not allow them [his children] to join in" any of them in order to "protect his children from any outside influences" (139). What can be seen here is that Solon makes a boundary between the inside, the Barnes home, and the outside, the urban society. This opposition of the two worlds is epitomized in the troubled relationship between Solon and his children throughout this story. In the scene of the inside of the Barnes' house, for instance, Solon's attempt to remove everything irrelevant to religion from his home and to follow the spirit of Quakerism is suggested:

> The same quiet round of duties which Benecia and Solon had known from

> childhood was here maintained. In their home, as in the homes of all Quakers in the region, were no pictures, no musical instruments of any kind, no books, except perhaps a few volumes on the subject of Quakerism. […] Art, society, the theater, these were never discussed or mentioned. (109; underline added)

In spite of Solon's attempt to remove any kinds of worldly things, the inside of the Barnes home becomes a place of limitation for the children, and Solon's attempt gradually irritates his children. The following passages show the children's dissatisfaction with their father's discipline:

> "I [Dorothea] don't see why Mother and Father want to be so strict with us," she complained to Isobel one day. "They won't let us go anywhere, unless it's to see a relative." (140)
>
> [Stewart's] mind filled with tales of adventurous expeditions on the part of other boys he knew: to Philadelphia to see a moving picture, to the theater, even to poolrooms. One lad had even explored the red-light district.

> There was also much talk of Atlantic City, which several of the boys had visited. They were crazy over its delights: the boardwalk, the great hotels, the roller chairs, the bathing; all beyond his reach. (194)
>
> And why was he never allowed to have a good time? (195)

Moreover, much of the narrative shifts to revealing the lives of the children who do not follow their father's expectations. The two younger children, Etta and Stewart, especially play an important part in the story by rebelling in different ways against Solon's discipline. This shows that the difference between the generations is a function of the separation of the traditional world, to which Solon belongs, from the advanced and secularized world. Although his children's attitude toward him bewilders Solon, he still tries to keep them away from the urban life. For instance, when he finds a French novel in Etta's room entitled *Sappho*, a novel that her advanced classmate has recommended to her, he goes into a rage:

> That such a book should be in this country, in this house, in the hands of my daughter or those of any young girl! To think that anyone should be

> famous for such dreadful and immoral words! […] "Etta, my child, how could a book like that be anything but wrong, or provoke anything but evil?" […] "Etta, who is to guide thee if thee turns away from the Inner Light?" (200)

For Solon's religious spirit, the new sense of value presented in *Sappho* is "immoral," and he wants to protect his children from the immoral public trend in the world. However, Solon's reaction here makes Etta feel antipathy toward her father and helps her to make up her mind to run away from home. She decides to go into the University of Wisconsin with her ambitious girl friend without her father's permission, and after a brief time as a student at the University of Wisconsin, Etta goes to New York and embarks on a love affair with a young artist. Like Carrie and Clyde, or other characters in Dreiser's earlier books who move from a small town to the big cities seeking possibilities to be successful, Etta moves from a small town to the Midwest and to New York, and this move represents the urbanization of American society. Solon's idealistic religious sense of value inspires Etta to go into the urban world and have the urban sense of value against Solon's will. Solon's religious nature thus plays a part in making

a boundary between the generations and it brings a conflict between the spirit of the times and the spirit of the Barnes home.

3. The Roles of Middle-Aged Women

3.1 Aunt Hester as a Door to a Different World

Although Solon tries to keep the inside of the Barnes home a place that embodies the religious ideal, which is presented as an opposite sense of value from the urban values, and tries to protect his children from the influences of the urban sense of value, the power of urban materialism proves impossible to ignore. The erosion of the boundary between the two spirits, that of the Barnes home and that of the times, is interestingly personified by two middle-aged women: Benecia's aunt, Hester, and, Solon's cousin, Rhoda.

The first scene in which Aunt Hester displays her authority over the Barnes family is when Isobel finishes her higher education and has to plan her future. Although Isobel would rather go to a college of her choice, Solon wants to send her to a university

at Oakwold that strictly adheres to the tenets of Quakerism, and he urges her to marry a "good boy from Friends."[3] Aunt Hester, however, tells him that the university's value system is too traditional. She argues that women are now able to work outside the home, and states that "there [are] other careers besides marriage for women" (146). Owing to her intervention, Isobel is able to attend Llewellyn Women's College, the college of her choice, where she, although initially pessimistic about her future because of her plain appearance, becomes a New Woman, highly educated and proud of her intellect. It is with Aunt Hester's help that she becomes acquainted with the urban way of thinking.

Aunt Hester also plays a part in the destiny of another Barnes offspring, Orville. This is when Orville has to start thinking about his future as well. Aunt Hester is instrumental in securing a job for him and in arranging his marriage. Orville is materialistic and a type of man who "wants to marry money" (149). Solon, however, believes that marriage should primarily be based on love. The idea of the relationship between marriage and money is a predominantly urban one and had often been explored in Dreiser's previous books (e.g., by Clyde in *An American Tragedy*). To achieve his goal, Orville befriends a classmate who is the son of Isaac Stoddard, the owner of a major pottery company, in the hopes of marrying his sister. Significantly, the person

who holds the most shares in the Stoddard's company is Aunt Hester. She writes a letter to an executive of the company and asks him to employ Orville. Thus, with Aunt Hester's help, Orville is able to secure employment and marry Stoddard's daughter. What Aunt Hester has done for Orville here is not what Solon wishes for. In this way, Aunt Hester, despite being a middle-aged woman, has authority over men such as the executive of the company, Orville, and Solon. Therefore, we can see Aunt Hester as the archetype of the New Woman, whose emergence threatened the masculine image away of males and gave the masculine image to female, and marked the growth of new urban values. Aunt Hester's influence over the Barnes home seems to indicate an erosion of the traditional sense of value.

Later in the story, with the sentence, "[H]ere again, Aunt Hester stepped in to the picture" (160), Aunt Hester is seen to influence the behavior of yet another of Solon's children, his third daughter, Etta. Etta informs her parents that she wants to attend a school different from her sisters' because she wants to do things differently; this baffles Solon. Aunt Hester suggests to Etta that she should attend a boarding school for girls at Chadd's Ford where Etta meets Volida, an ambitious and enthusiastic classmate who influences Etta a great deal. Volida strongly encourages Etta to enroll in

the University of Wisconsin with her:

> These eastern girls' schools make me tired! […] They think all a girl wants to do is get married! I'm not living just to get married someday. When I get through here I'm going to the University of Wisconsin. […] I'm going to study medicine and be a doctor. It's the best co-educational college in the country. (162)

Volida's ideas about marriage are similar to Aunt Hester's. This implies that although Aunt Hester belongs to an older generation, she has the same progressive ideas as some young people of the current generation. Etta asks her father for permission to enroll in the university with Volida, but Solon refuses because he believes that women should only stay at home. Even worse, Solon forbids Etta to maintain her friendship with Volida after he learns that the "evil" (200) popular French novel, *Sappho*, which he finds in Etta's room, is Volida's. In doing so, Solon wants Etta to abstain from having interest in the sense of value in the world, which he considers "immoral" (200). However, unwillingly, Etta decides to escape from the conservative atmosphere of the

Barnes home. For her, the journey is a "door to a different world" (203) where she is free from the repressively religious atmosphere of her family home. Aunt Hester plays a part in helping Etta to escape. Etta needs money for her journey, and she remembers the inheritance she received from Aunt Hester, who has recently passed away and left her fortune to Solon's three daughters. Then, Etta pawns her mother's diamond sunburst and pearls, and runs away with the money she receives for them. Aunt Hester here again gives one of Solon's children a chance to open the door to urban life.

The situations of Solon's second daughter, Dorothea, and youngest son, Stewart, are different from those of the other three children. They are concerned less with what to do in the future than with the pleasures the outside world has to offer. The person who gives them the opportunity to experience these pleasures is Rhoda, who is depicted as a more secular though more gaudy woman than Aunt Hester. Despite being Solon's cousin, she is characterized in sharp contrast to him:

> [Rhoda] was attracted by the easy and luxurious phases of life, which, while more or less restrained in her own home and the homes of the Friends of her acquaintance, were nonetheless quite visible in the non-Quaker world of the

> period and era: fine horses and carriages, rich furnishings, and smart and fashionable clothing. (64-5)

She is the type of woman who regards marriage as an opportunity to escape an unfulfilling country life. Rhoda herself has got married to Segar Wallin, a wealthy doctor, and has been an important person in society. In that sense, Rhoda is described as a different type of woman from Aunt Hester. Although Solon could have chances to know how she lives through local newspapers, he tends to keep Rhoda at a distance because Solon feels that there is a "difference in morals" (157) between his family and Rhoda's. For her part, Rhoda consciously and intentionally chooses to experience luxury and pleasure and tries to encourage young people to experience these as well. Rhoda wants Solon's children to become a part of her circle. She first goes to see Dorothea, invites her to a farewell dinner for an ambassador, and then introduces her to the fashionable young men and women in her circle. At the party, Dorothea, who has never had the experience of entertaining at parties, wears a brightly colored dress of a style that she has never worn in her life and dances with young men. This experience makes her feel as though she is "transgressing against an older, more sedate order of

things" (190), and she thinks of "the magic world that [has] opened its gates to her" (191). This party gives her a chance to experience the outside world and urban popular culture.

Rhoda is pleased at her success in making Dorothea a part of her circle and thinks that "she was right in wanting to get the Barnes children away from the oppressive austerity of their home life" (252). She then tries to do the same for Stewart, who is often at odds with his father because of the latter's conventional way of thinking. Solon refuses to give him permission to go on an out-of-town trip with the boys in his class. When Rhoda learns about this, she visits Stewart and berates him for not keeping up with the spirit of the times, and says to him, "How can you give up music, and dancing, and theaters and books and motion pictures, and fit into the world of today?" (253). Thanks to her financial and moral support, Stewart gets the chance to experience a different world. On the long-awaited day of the trip, Stewart leaves with his two friends and meets two girls on the way. All of them are typical modern society youths. After the drive, he joins their party and dances for the first time, thinking that he is now "so much more important" (260). Just as in the case of Dorothea, the party gives Stewart a chance to get to know the outside world and to experience urban popular

culture.

Thus, despite Solon's indifference toward her and his aim of protecingt his children from the influences of the "immoral" new urban sense of value, Rhoda is concerned about the Barnes children and she actually plays a role in giving Dorothea and Stewart the opportunity to experience a world different from the one they have hitherto known. It means that the apparently immoral modern sense of value in the world of the day now absorbs the long-believed moral traditional sense of value and becomes a common sense, and it is indicated by the descriptions of the relationship between middle aged women, Aunt Hester and Rhoda, and a younger generation, Solon's children. Interestingly, however, it is Aunt Hester who facilitates this in the first place here. What gives Rhoda a chance to get to know the Barnes children, despite the limited contact between the two families, is the funeral ceremony for Aunt Hester. At Aunt Hester's funeral, Rhoda meets the children, is attracted by "the beauty of [their] youth" (177), and thinks of inviting them into her circle. Therefore, here again, Aunt Hester indirectly plays a role in allowing the Barnes children to experience a different world.

3.2 The Image of Women Represented in the Description of Aunt Hester

There is a passage in which Dreiser describes Aunt Hester thus:

> Aunt Hester was a remarkably progressive woman, with quite modern and unbiased views on life in general. She had had the case of considerable property ever since her youth, and the conduct of her affairs had necessitated wide and varied contacts. So it was that with Solon and Benecia this long, lean vigorous spinster indulged in the most serious and extensive discussions as to the children's future. (145)

This is the only description of Aunt Hester's character in the book. Although it seems as if she is not important in this story, Dreiser allows her to play a major role: determining the Barnes children's future.

The character and actions of Aunt Hester recall the general image of women at the turn of the century, especially that of the so-called "New Women." In her book, *Bachelor Girl*, Betsy Isreal uses the term "New Woman" to describe leftist women

intellectuals who appeared at the turn of the century and participated in women's suffrage movements. Isreal describes them as "living monuments to what many called the 'new possibility'" (Isreal 115). In her discussions, Isreal explores how representations of women changed with the times. She makes a distinction between those "New Woman" and the women who appeared after them and attempted to fit into urban society with their sexual charm, such as "Bowery girls," "Bohemians," and "Flappers," and calls the latter the "'popular' New Women" (Isreal 119). In short, the New Women are activist intellectuals and not the same group as the popular New Woman who are usually not intellectuals.

Dreiser, as many critics point out, is usually interested in depicting the popular New Women, who were more influenced by the spirit of the times. Besides, the femininity might be one of key elements of the female characters in Dreiser's novels. Irena Gammel points out that femininity in Dreiser's female characters is mostly associated with women playing the role of sexual objects for men:

> [All] of Dreiser's major female characters are assumed to be endowed with bodies saturated with sex, so that they cannot escape a sexual destiny […].

> The sex-filled female is a rather static target that prompts the male to move, attracting the males like a honey pot does the buzzing flies. (Gammel 37)

Indeed, Dreiser rarely describes women without mentioning their sexual relations with men. As with Carrie and Jennie, most of Dreiser's female characters attract men with their sexual charm and use it to get the chance to have a better life. On that point, generally Dreiser's female characters are "popular" New Women who need men to survive urban society. Even if they do gain their independence in the end, they can never stop being sexual objects for men. Arguably, Dreiser's novels represent the traditional male chauvinistic relationship between men and women, and show us his negative attitude toward independent women. In addition, in his novels, Dreiser describes the women, who belong to men, as representations of the pastoral ideal and shows urbanization of the society through the relationship between men who indicate the cities and women. In so doing, he suggests the weakened influences of the pastoral ideal under urbanization.

However, the image of Aunt Hester in *The Bulwark* differs from such images of Dreiser's other female characters. As Clare Virginia Eby points out, while Dreiser's

works often depict “more passive aspect of women’s strength, especially through the perspective of male characters and narrators,” “he was also fascinated by a second aspect of feminine power which he traces through economic, social, or artistic accomplishment, and in emotional or psychological authority” (Eby 143). Although Eby also refers to the femininity in Dreiser’s female characters, she says that Dreiser sometimes allows them “to transcend the expected social limits” (Eby 157). This might be applied to the descriptions of Aunt Hester. She has never married, and surprisingly, Dreiser does not mention her sexual experiences. Dreiser merely informs us that Aunt Hester is a “long, lean” and “remarkably progressive” (149) woman of business of the late nineteenth century. This image of Aunt Hester and the absence of details of her sexual experiences remind us of the image of female activists such as Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), who is introduced by Margaret Bacon in *Mother of Feminism* as a “long, lean” woman of business. Anthony, who never married, was a central figure in women’s suffrage movements. Although there is no indication in the novel of Aunt Hester’s commitment to political movements, it is possible to identify her with female activists by focusing on her role in bringing the spirit of the times to the Barnes home, which persisted in observing conservative religious conventions; in her economic influence

over the male executives of a company; and in her decision to leave her money to three young girls to help them survive in urban society.

Moreover, the "long, lean" description of Aunt Hester reminds us of a description in *The Titan*, in which Dreiser uses the phrase to characterize the male economic and political elite in the Union Club in Chicago (*T* 10), and of the description of Cowperwood's father in the *Financier* (*F* 5). This shows that Dreiser tries to give the masculine image to Aunt Hester, and it suggests that Dreiser contradicts his negative point of view of independent women by using the powerful and masculine image of Aunt Hester to emphasize the power of urban values. He shows the urbanizing world by depicting the possible shift of masculinity from men to women. Aunt Hester, in short, represents urban values and plays the role of breaking the boundary between "the spirit of the Barnes home" and "the spirit of the times."

4. The Power of the Spirit of the Times at the End of *The Bulwark*

Solon's attempt to protect his children from the spirit of the times is a failure;

he becomes estranged from his children and faces many tragedies, beginning with that of Stewart. Stewart and his school friends plan an excursion with some young women, with whom they plan to have sex. On the trip, the boys attempt to drug a young girl who has resisted them in the past. One of Stewart's friends administers the drug to the reticent girl, without knowing that she has heart disease, and this eventually kills her. Although he is not directly responsible for the crime, he consents with two other boys to abandon the girl. Stewart's unbearable guilt as well as his belief that he has betrayed his father's love and the morals he has learned at home lead him to commit suicide in jail, which causes the death of the grief-stricken Benecia. The situation of Stewart's tragedy is similar to the case of Clyde's; however, whereas Clyde is portrayed as the victim of an unfair social system and eventually is given the death penalty, Stewart is "tortured to his very soul by regret and sorrow and decides to kill himself," and it causes his mother's death too. These differences between the deaths of the two heroes seem to illustrate Dreiser's changed idea of "individual responsibility" (Hussman 159), and of faith. Solon, in the throes of his sorrow, begins to doubt everything in the secular world and resigns from the bank. He begins to appreciate natural beauty and rediscovers the presence of God in nature, and eventually decides to renounce the world and live amidst

nature. Finally, on his deathbed, he asks Etta to bring the gold-framed motto that he hung in their dining room and to hang it so that he can see it in its recumbent position; the motto is a phrase by old Joseph, "In honor, preferring one another." Solon tells Etta that "it was the spirit of our home" (333). The motto that the dying Solon adopts at the end of his life is quoted from Romans 12:10 and makes the ending of this story a religious one. As Hussman points out, "Dreiser's eventual appreciation of faith and peace seems to be presented in this conclusion" (179), and this ending indeed seems to represent Dreiser's changed view of life in his last years. Interestingly, however, Solon receives the framed motto on the day he receives word of the death of Aunt Hester. Her death is what drives Solon to buy the framed motto. Considering the influence of Aunt Hester upon the Barnes home, this might not be a coincidence. By associating the motto with the death of Aunt Hester, Dreiser allows readers to remember her at the conclusion of this novel. While the end of the story emphasizes Solon's belief in the glory of nature, it shows us the fact that Solon is unable to escape from the spirit of the times throughout his life. The spirit of the Barnes home is unable to overcome the strong power of the spirit of the times after all.

The descriptions of Solon's last days in the woods emphasize his weakened

and defeated situation. There are passages which describe Solon, who has now grown weak physically and mentally, at the conclusion of this novel:

> Solon's remaining days were few. He lived only about three months from the date of the doctor's diagnosis of his illness. The intimations of his end came fairly slowly at first. For one thing, his rising and retiring periods became less easily managed by him than before. He walked less securely, and was slower in formulating his requests or in speaking at all, and his memory was failing.
>
> One morning, as Etta came over to his bedside, he looked up at her and said feebly: "Daughter, what has become of that poor old man who was dying of cancer?" […] Finally she [Etta] recovered herself enough to ask: "What old man, Father, does thee refer to?" "Why… Why…" he began, "that poor old man whose son killed himself." (332)

Soon after this, Solon asks Etta to bring the golden-framed motto. We can see here that the image of religion is displayed in connection with the powerlessness of Solon, who once had authority in the family and the world, and what makes his situation weaker in

that way is his religious nature. The description of the weakened Solon in the final scene represents the powerlessness and helplessness of the religious hero.

5. Conclusion

In *The Bulwark*, as we have seen, the contrast between the urban values and the pastoral ideal present a binary opposition: the spirit of the Barnes home versus the spirit of the times. Although there are many who focus on Solon's mystical experiences such as the snake incident in the final garden scene and argue that the experiences make Solon's rediscovery of faith possible and refine Dreiser's understanding of the Creative Force, nobody seems to have paid attention to the function of Aunt Hester in this novel and argues that the existence of her makes the rediscovery in the end a failure. However, when we look at how Dreiser represents urban values through the character of Aunt Hester, and examine how he frames the opposition of two different sets of values in this novel, we can see that Solon's failure in the rediscovery of self in nature is revealed by Dreiser at the end of the story. The failure represents the helplessness of the religious hero, and suggests the absolute power of urbanization upon the pastoral ideal. In his

final novel, Dreiser depicts the figure of the city in which the urban sense of value has achieved a dominant position in the world, and displays the figure of the future city. This final description, far from the final embodiment of Dreiser's religious thought, shows us his attempt to demonstrate the power of urbanization over American society and shows his naturalistic way of writing. Dreiser, who has presented his affirmative or equivocal point of view of urban-pastoral harmony by showing the influence of the pastoral ideal on the people in the cities, now in his final book, clearly denies the possibility of realizing urban-pastoral harmony. On that point, *The Bulwark* is an advanced piece which suggests the problem of the relationship between urban and pastoral in the cities. By reading this apparently conservative book in Dreiser's last years in this way, it becomes clear that *The Bulwark* is a book which reflects the city novelist Dreiser's naturalistic point of view.

Notes

[1] As I have already explained in the "Introduction," to represent "life as it is," and "the

facts as they exist" (Giles 48), and to write about his own "crude experience" (47) can be recognized as definitions of "Dreiserian naturalism."

[2] See Pizer's "Dreiser's Critical Reputation" on the University of Pennsylvania Dreiser Web Source.

[3] "Friends" means the members of "the Society of Friends," Quakers.

Conclusion

Americans have had their own tradition of pastoralism which is different from the European pastoralism, and have sought to build a harmonious relationship between an extravagant city life and an unsophisticated country life. The existence of the urban, in short, is indispensable for American pastoralism. Realizing the "harmonious" relationship between the urban and the pastoral was one of the important and debatable problems for people in the city at the turn of the century. While many people believed in the possibility of pastoral happiness as a life-style in the city, some people became doubtful about the belief. American city novelists were interested in such ambivalence toward the issue of urban-pastoral harmony, and they focused on depicting the opposition between the urban and the rural sensibilities in American cities. As I explained in the Introduction, although it is said that American writers have written about the issue of urban-pastoral harmony from an ironic perspective, there are actually great variations in the reactions to the issue. Therefore, when we examine the issue of urban pastoralism in American writings, we need to focus on both the urban elements and the pastoral elements in the work, examine how the relationship between the two realms is described, and explain the various viewpoints of the issue. On that point, reading Dreiser's works, which have been recognized as representative of American city novels, in that context indeed helps us understand the transitions in the

various viewpoints of urban-pastoral harmony. Although Dreiser has been recognized as a great American city novelist who mainly depicts the reality of the city as it is, when we read his works in the context of the issue of urban-pastoral harmony, it becomes clear that Dreiser also has dealt intently with the issue of urban pastoralism in many different social aspects. Therefore, in thinking of urban pastoralism in American cities, I argue that there is much to be gained by examining the pastoral elements and the different description of the relationship between the urban and the pastoral in Dreiser's works.

First of all, in his first novel *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser shows us the pastoral elements in the urban society by describing Carrie in connection with the image of the country. In *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser seems to eliminate the existence of the country from the narrative and mainly depicts the city scene, and it gives the readers and critics an impression that Dreiser is foremost an American city novelist. However, as I have argued, the themes which Dreiser writes about in his novels, are not only the reality of the city and the problem of the individual and the society. By depicting the connection between Carrie and the country, the relationship between Carrie and male city dwellers, and describing the instability of Carrie, Dreiser also writes about the reality of the urbanized country. We can read *Sister Carrie* as an introduction to understanding urban pastoralism in Dreiser's works. In *Jennie Gerhardt*, he projects more clearly the pastoral ideal onto the descriptions of Jennie and displays the pastoral ideal as an ideal

refuge for people in the urban society. Although Dreiser depicts the overwhelming power of urbanization through the descriptions of the unstable relationship between Jennie and Lester, Dreiser describes Lester's desire to be with Jennie in his last days and his dream of a peaceful life with her in the conclusion. One of Lester's last words to Jennie, "We should never have parted" (*J* 244), shows Dreiser's hope for a harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral. We can see his affirmative attitude toward the issue of urban-pastoral harmony in this work.

In the first and the second volume of the *Trilogy of Desire* and *The "Genius,"* Dreiser writes about the activities of a young successful man in the modern business world and depicts the urban life from the viewpoint of a financial hero in the city. There he again projects the image of the pastoral ideal onto the descriptions of his women characters, and describes the unstable relationship between the heroes and women. The heroes' pursuit of the perfect women and his influential power over the women represents both urbanization of nature and men's quest for a pastoral ideal. Dreiser suggests the changeable power relationship between the urban and the pastoral by describing the changeable power relationship between the male hero and women. By depicting such instability, Dreiser shows the reality of ambiguity in American society in which urban values and the pastoral ideal intermingle, and shows people struggling to deal with the opposition of those two elements in the city. It also indicates

Dreiser's own uncertainty about the urban-pastoral relationship. Dreiser, who had had an affirmative idea of urban-pastoral harmony, now becomes skeptical of it.

Thus, in his earlier books, Dreiser wrote about the issue of the urban-pastoral relationship *in* the cities; however, in his next novel, Dreiser also wrote about the issue in the rural society *outside* the city. In *An American Tragedy*, he depicts two different realities of the rural society, the urbanization of nature itself, and a still surviving social order in the countryside, through the descriptions of the relationship between nature, mainly lakes, and the characters. By describing the realities of the suburban society, Dreiser shows us the fact that the country area cannot always be idealized, and shows us his negative attitude to urban-pastoral harmony. His disclosure of the limits of the pastoral ideal and the impossibility of realizing a harmonious relationship between the urban and the pastoral under urbanization becomes clear in his final work, *The Bulwark*. When *The Bulwark* was published almost twenty years later, most critics and readers recognized the book as the novelist's final message of faith and peace because of the religious description of Solon's nature. However, in actuality, Dreiser shows the absolute power of the urban over the pastoral through the descriptions of helplessness of the religious protagonist, and shows his negative view of the urban-pastoral ideal. The description of the absolutely dominant city here reflects the new structure of urban society and shows us the final result of urban pastoralism under urbanization.

By reading almost all of Dreiser's novels in terms of the problem of the urban-pastoral relationship under urbanization, I have explained how Dreiser describes the urban, the pastoral, and the relationship of the two realms in his books. In so doing, it becomes clear that, Dreiser, who has been recognized as a representative of the American city novelist, was interested in the pastoral ideal in the cities, and had written about the issue of urban-pastoral harmony throughout his career. In his works, Dreiser shows us the fact that there are various reactions to the issue of urban-pastoral harmony in American urban society at the turn of the century, and also writes about a transition in his own ideas about the issue. By looking carefully at the transition in the descriptions of the urban-pastoral relationship, we can comprehend how American people at that time dreamed of the pastoral ideal in their city-life, and how they dealt with the difficulties of realizing urban-pastoral harmony. Even though Marx does not refer to Dreiser when he discusses American pastoralism, as I said, on this point the works of Dreiser are indeed appropriate for examining urban pastoralism in American writings.

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