

**SCIENCE**  
**PROBLEMS.UZ**

ISSN 2181-1342

Actual problems of social and humanitarian sciences  
Актуальные проблемы социальных и гуманитарных наук

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**Received:** 05 May 2024  
**Accepted:** 10 May 2024  
**Published:** 25 May 2024

*Article / Original Paper*

## **EXPLORATION OF IRONY OF DESIRES THROUGH THE LENS OF PSYCHOLOGY AND MORALITY IN THEODORE DREISER'S NOVEL "SISTER CARRIE"**

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**Abstract.** This article delves into the intricate dynamics of human emotions, desires, and ambitions within Theodore Dreiser's novel "Sister Carrie". It explores the profound psychological transformations and moral dilemmas experienced by the characters. Through meticulous analysis of dialogue excerpts, it unveils the complexities of their inner worlds and the consequences of their choices. By dissecting the characters' aspirations and ethical struggles, it provides fresh perspectives on their development and the moral inquiries embedded in the narrative. Ultimately, the article offers profound insights into the interplay of personal ambition, societal expectations, and moral integrity within the novel's rich tapestry of human experience.

**Keywords:** desire, goals, emotions, irony, psychology, morality, degradation, success, reformation, satisfaction.

## **TEODOR DRAYZERNING "BAXTIQARO KERRI" ROMANIDA PSIXOLOGIYA VA AXLOQ PRIZMASI ORQALI ISTAKNING ISTEHZOSINI O'RGANISH**

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fan nomzodi, Buxoro davlat universiteti dotsenti

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqola Teodor Drayzer "Baxtiqaro Kerri" romanidagi personajlarning ehtimoli, istaklari, psixologik o'zgarishlari va ambitsiyalarining murakkab dinamikasiga e'tibor qaratadi. U personajlar tomonidan tajriba etilgan chuqur psixologik o'zgarishlarni va ma'naviy kutilmalarini tahlil qiladi. Diologlarning qisimatlarini tekshirib, ularning ichki jahonlarining murakkabliklarini va tanlovlarning natijalarini o'rganishga harakat qiladi. Personajlarning etik va psixologik kurashlarini tahlil qilish orqali, maqola ularning rivojlanishiga va kelajakdagi ma'naviy savollarga yangi nazarlar taklif qiladi. Xulosa qilib, maqola odam istaklari, jamiyatning umidlari va adolatiyining keng spektrida inson tajribasining ta'sirini chuqur tushuntiradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** istak, maqsadlar, his-tuyg'ular, kinoya, psixologiya, axloq, tanazzul, muvaffaqiyat, islohot, qoniqish,

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47390/SPR1342V4SI3Y2024N30>

**Introduction.** "Sister Carrie" by Theodore Dreiser stands as a towering achievement in American literature, revered by luminaries such as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Their collective praise elevates Dreiser's novel to the ranks of the greatest American works of all time, cementing its status as a seminal work that continues to resonate with readers across generations. Hemingway's recognition of Dreiser's mastery in portraying the lives

of the urban poor underscores the novel's profound impact on human destiny. Through vivid characters and compelling storytelling, Dreiser captures the struggles and aspirations of individuals navigating the complexities of early 20th-century American society [2, p.31]. Faulkner's admiration for "Sister Carrie" further illuminates its enduring significance. His appreciation for Dreiser's ability to navigate intricate social contradictions speaks to the novel's thematic richness and its ability to provoke thought on the human condition [3, p.35]. Likewise, Fitzgerald's endorsement of Dreiser's storytelling prowess and his recognition of the novel's realism and historical significance further contribute to its esteemed reputation [4, p.25]. Collectively, these reviews serve as a testament to the lasting impact of "Sister Carrie" on American literature. Dreiser's magnum opus continues to captivate readers with its timeless themes of ambition, desire, and societal constraints. Through its exploration of human nature and social dynamics, the novel offers valuable insights into the complexities of American society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Beyond its literary merits, "Sister Carrie" occupies a significant place within the broader cultural discourse. Dreiser's keen observations of the human psyche and his ability to shed light on social inequalities enrich the cultural landscape, prompting reflection on issues that remain relevant today. In conclusion, "Sister Carrie" remains a beacon of literary excellence, its enduring legacy a testament to the enduring power of storytelling. As readers continue to engage with its pages, the novel continues to inspire, challenge, and provoke thought on the human experience and the complexities of the American dream.

**Methods.** The present investigation utilizes a literary analysis methodology to examine Theodore Dreiser's novel "Sister Carrie." The text is closely studied and examined in order to identify and understand important themes, characters, and narrative devices. This approach seeks to reveal more profound understandings of the novel's depiction of society, human nature, and moral quandaries by concentrating on the text itself. Historical Setting: In order to furnish a thorough comprehension of "Sister Carrie," this research integrates historical contextualization. The novel places its setting and the lives of its characters into the historical context of late 19th-century America by delving into its socioeconomic situations, cultural standards, and metropolitan environments. This approach makes it possible to investigate the ways in which Dreiser's story both critiques and reflects the larger social and economic changes of the time. Psychological Analysis: This study analyzes the characters in "Sister Carrie" from a psychological perspective by using psychological theories and concepts. Understanding human psychology and interpersonal dynamics is obtained by examining the wants, motivations, and actions of people like Carrie and Hurstwood. This approach offers a more profound comprehension of the behaviors of the characters and the intricate psychological dynamics that underlie their relationships.

**Literature review.** "Sister Carrie" by Theodore Dreiser has garnered widespread acclaim from esteemed literary figures, cementing its status as a seminal work in American literature. Ernest Hemingway, known for his own contributions to the literary canon, hailed Dreiser's novel as one of the greatest American works of all time. Hemingway's praise underscored Dreiser's mastery in portraying the lives of the urban poor and their profound impact on human destiny, highlighting the novel's enduring relevance and power [2, p.31]. Similarly, William Faulkner, revered as one of the foremost writers of the 20th century, expressed admiration for "Sister Carrie," recognizing its significance to American literature. Faulkner lauded Dreiser's ability to delve into the depths of the characters and skillfully navigate complex social contradictions. His endorsement further solidified the novel's place within the literary canon, emphasizing its

enduring relevance and thematic richness [3, p.35]. F. Scott Fitzgerald, acclaimed author of "The Great Gatsby," also added his voice to the chorus of praise for "Sister Carrie." Fitzgerald recognized Dreiser's groundbreaking storytelling approach and applauded the novel's exploration of social themes. His appreciation for the novel's realism, depth, and historical significance further underscored its enduring legacy in American literary history [4, p.25]. Collectively, these reviews serve as testament to the profound impact of "Sister Carrie" on the landscape of American literature. Dreiser's magnum opus has left an indelible mark on readers and critics alike, resonating across generations with its timeless themes and compelling narrative. Through its vivid portrayal of characters grappling with ambition, desire, and societal constraints, "Sister Carrie" continues to captivate audiences and provoke thought on the human condition. Beyond its literary merits, "Sister Carrie" occupies a significant place within the broader cultural discourse, shedding light on the complexities of American society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dreiser's keen insights into the human psyche and social dynamics have earned the novel a rightful place among the canon of American classics, where it stands as a beacon of literary excellence and a testament to the enduring power of storytelling.

**Results and analyses.** Dreiser's "Sister Carrie" stands as a timeless exploration of the human condition, delving into the intricacies of desire, ambition, and societal influence. Through the lens of Carrie's journey, Dreiser masterfully navigates the complexities of human relationships and the pursuit of success in a materialistic world. At the heart of the novel are Carrie's relationships with Charles Drouet and George Hurstwood, which serve as both catalysts for her social ascent and reflections of broader societal norms. Drouet represents the allure of material wealth and social acceptance, offering Carrie a pathway to escape her humble origins. However, her subsequent involvement with Hurstwood complicates this narrative, revealing the moral ambiguities and ethical dilemmas inherent in the pursuit of personal ambition. Through Carrie's experiences, Dreiser highlights the paradoxical nature of human desires. While the attainment of success is often perceived as the pinnacle of fulfillment, Carrie's journey exposes the inherent emptiness of such achievements. Despite her rising social status and material wealth, Carrie finds herself increasingly disillusioned, grappling with a profound sense of dissatisfaction and yearning for something beyond the superficial trappings of success. This exploration of the human psyche extends beyond Carrie's individual narrative to encompass broader themes of societal ambition and the elusive nature of happiness. Dreiser deftly illuminates the ironies of social mobility, wherein love and relationships are commodified as means to an end, rather than ends in themselves. Through Carrie's interactions with Drouet and Hurstwood, readers are confronted with the sobering reality of human relationships shaped by the pursuit of personal gain. Ultimately, "Sister Carrie" serves as a poignant meditation on the inherent limitations of materialism and the ephemeral nature of success. Carrie's relentless pursuit of happiness mirrors the larger human condition, wherein fulfillment remains perpetually out of reach, obscured by the ever-shifting horizon of desire. In exposing the fragility of human aspirations, Dreiser challenges readers to reconsider their own values and priorities, urging them to look beyond the trappings of wealth and status in search of true fulfillment and meaning in life.

**Discussion.** In "Sister Carrie," Theodore Dreiser employs irony to challenge conventional notions of success and happiness. Despite Carrie's attainment of material wealth and social recognition, her inner world is fraught with doubts and uncertainties, highlighting the futility of equating happiness with external achievements. A poignant example of this irony is evident in

Dreiser's dialogue, which captures the essence of Carrie's existential discontent. In one such instance, Carrie reflects on her newfound success, lamenting, "Is this all there is?" This simple yet profound question encapsulates Dreiser's critique of the pursuit of material wealth and social status as a means to fulfillment. Through Carrie's inner turmoil, Dreiser reveals the inherent emptiness of striving for external validation, suggesting that true happiness lies beyond the trappings of success. This dialogue exemplifies Dreiser's style, characterized by introspective musings that challenge the reader's preconceptions and provoke deeper reflection. By juxtaposing Carrie's outward achievements with her internal dissatisfaction, Dreiser underscores the irony of equating success with happiness. Through such moments of introspection, "Sister Carrie" invites readers to question societal norms and reconsider the nature of true fulfillment in a materialistic world [pp 298-313].

Charles Drouet observed her closely as she entered. *"I noticed you the moment you walked in," he began, his voice carrying a mixture of curiosity and an almost protective warmth. "There are not many girls in Chicago who possess such a fresh and innocent appearance. The city, it can be a rather harsh place for those who find themselves alone"*

Carrie, her voice a mixture of hesitation and vulnerability, replied, "I... I've just arrived. Sometimes, I fear I may have erred in coming here, but it seems too late now to turn back".

He, quick to offer reassurance, responded: *"An error? By no means. Chicago is ripe with opportunities for those who are ready to seek them out. You simply require a bit of assistance and guidance. I could offer you that help, if you would allow it"*[6, p.314].

In this pivotal moment, Carrie's emotions teeter between hope and anxiety as she silently nods, unaware of the profound implications this meeting will have on her life. Little does she know that this encounter will herald the beginning of her journey towards temporary ascension, where she will taste the fleeting allure of success and societal recognition. However, amidst the glimmer of hope, lurks a shadow of uncertainty, foreshadowing the deep emptiness that will soon accompany her desire for a better life. Carrie's silent acquiescence symbolizes her tentative acceptance of the opportunities that lie ahead, yet beneath the surface, a storm of conflicting emotions rages. The promise of a brighter future beckons her forward, offering a glimpse of the fulfillment she longs for. However, mingling with her hope is a nagging sense of apprehension, an intuitive awareness that the path she embarks upon may not lead to the satisfaction she seeks. Unbeknownst to Carrie, her journey towards temporary ascension will be fraught with disillusionment and existential angst. As she ascends the social ladder and achieves fleeting success, she will come face to face with the profound emptiness that accompanies her desires. The realization that material wealth and societal acclaim fail to quench the thirst of her soul will dawn upon her, leaving her grappling with a sense of disillusionment and yearning for something beyond the superficial trappings of success. In this moment of silent agreement, Carrie unwittingly sets foot on a path that will challenge her perceptions of happiness and fulfillment. The journey that lies ahead will test her resilience, forcing her to confront the profound complexities of human desire and the elusive nature of true contentment.

- *"I noticed you the moment you walked in"*. This statement creates a sense of attention and specialness, which may flatter Carrie, but also emphasizes her vulnerability and newness in the city.

- *“There are not many girls in Chicago who possess such a fresh and innocent appearance”*. The words “fresh and innocent” highlight Carrie's youth and naivety, which Drouet sees as attractive, but ironically these same qualities make her especially vulnerable in the city.

- *“The city, it can be a rather harsh place for those who find themselves alone”*. It is a warning about the difficulties of city life, and also serves as Drouet's way of offering himself as a protector or savior, despite his own selfish motives.

- *“I... I've just arrived”*. The repetition of “I” expresses Carrie's indecision and uncertainty, emphasizing her worry and uncertainty.

- *“I fear I may have erred in coming here”*. Reflects Carrie's inner doubts and fear of the unknown, which makes her more susceptible to influence.

*“but it seems too late now to turn back.”*

Expresses a feeling of hopelessness and acceptance of the irreversibility of her decision, which increases her vulnerability. The irony in “Sister Carrie” lies in the paradoxical nature of Carrie's journey towards what appears to be a better life. Despite each new step she takes towards success and societal acceptance, Carrie finds herself plagued by a persistent sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction. This recurring theme underscores Dreiser's critique of the American Dream and the pursuit of material wealth as pathways to happiness. Each achievement, whether it be in career advancement or social standing, only serves to deepen Carrie's existential unease, highlighting the disconnect between external success and internal fulfillment. Through Carrie's experiences, Dreiser challenges the reader to reconsider traditional notions of prosperity and contentment, suggesting that true happiness may lie beyond the trappings of societal expectations. Ultimately, the irony lies in the realization that despite outward appearances of success, Carrie remains adrift in a sea of discontent, grappling with the elusive nature of fulfillment in a materialistic world.

*“And then if that little real estate deal I've got on goes through, we'll get married”, Charlie said with a great show of earnestness, the while he took his place before the mirror and began brushing his hair.*

*“I don't believe you ever intend to marry me, Charlie”, Carrie said ruefully.*

*“Oh, yes I do—course I do—what put that into your head?”*

*He had stopped his trifling before the mirror now and crossed over to her. For the first time Carrie felt as if she must move away from him.*

*“But you've been saying that so long,” she said.*

*“Well, and I mean it too, but it takes money to live as I want to. Now, when I get this increase, I can come pretty near fixing things all right, and I'll do it. Now, don't you worry, girlie.” “Oh, no,” she said remorsefully, her tone reflecting some of her own success and more of her helplessness, “you never will”.*

*“Well, you wait a little while and see,” he concluded. “I'll marry you all right”.*

*Carrie looked at him and felt justified. She was looking for something which would calm her conscience, and here it was, a light, airy disregard of her claims upon his justice. He had faithfully promised to marry her, and this was the way he fulfilled his promise.*

*“Now, don't you worry, girlie” [7, p. 45].*

In “Sister Carrie,” Theodore Dreiser skillfully employs irony to dissect the dynamics of power and control within relationships, as well as the unforeseen consequences of desire. One such instance occurs when a seemingly reassuring offer from a character actually reveals

underlying motives of dominance and control. For example, when a character offers support, it initially appears as an act of reassurance. However, upon closer examination, the phrasing suggests a desire to assert dominance and establish control over the relationship. This subtle manipulation transforms the offer into a condition, implying that Carrie must acquiesce to certain terms in order to receive support. Dreiser's use of irony here exposes the complexities of power dynamics and underscores the fragile balance of agency within interpersonal relationships. Similarly, the character of George Hurstwood embodies another layer of irony in his tragic trajectory. Initially introduced as a successful hotel manager, Hurstwood's encounter with Carrie sets off a chain of events that ultimately lead to his downfall. His passion for Carrie blinds him to the consequences of his actions, as he makes a series of misguided decisions that result in the loss of his job, family, and ultimately his sense of well-being. The irony lies in the contrast between Hurstwood's initial success and his eventual demise, highlighting the unpredictable nature of desire and its ability to unravel even the most stable lives. Through Hurstwood's tragic arc, Dreiser explores the theme of hubris and the consequences of unchecked ambition, serving as a cautionary tale against the pitfalls of obsession and desire. Overall, Dreiser's adept use of irony in "Sister Carrie" adds depth and complexity to the novel's exploration of human relationships and desires. By subverting expectations and revealing the unintended consequences of actions, Dreiser challenges readers to confront the complexities of power, desire, and the human condition.

*Hurstwood said nothing. He had seen the new things she was buying; the way she was neglecting household duties; the readiness with which she was slipping out afternoons and staying. He felt that something was going to happen. All at once she spoke:*

*"I don't know," she said; "I can't do it all. I don't earn enough".*

*This was a direct challenge. Hurstwood had to take it up. He tried to be calm.*

*"I don't want you to do it all," he said. "I only want a little help until I can get something to do".*

*"Oh, yes," answered Carrie. "That's always the way. It takes more than I can earn to pay for things. I don't see what I'm going to do.*

*"Well, I've tried to get something," he exclaimed. What do you want me to do?"*

*"You couldn't have tried so very hard," said Carrie. "I got something".*

*"Well, I did," he said, angered almost to harsh words. "You needn't throw up your success to me. All I asked was a little help until I could get something. I'm not down yet. I'll come up all right".*

*He tried to speak steadily, but his voice trembled a little.*

*Carrie's anger melted on the instant. She felt ashamed.*

*"Well," she said, "here's the money," and emptied it out on the table. "I haven't got quite enough to pay it all. If they can wait until Saturday, though, I'll have some more".*

*"You keep it," said Hurstwood sadly. "I only want enough to pay the grocer" [8, p.171].*

The irony of George Hurstwood's situation in "Sister Carrie" is stark: his pursuit of happiness through love ultimately results in his tragic downfall, standing in stark contrast to Carrie's upward trajectory. Initially portrayed as a successful hotel manager, Hurstwood's infatuation with Carrie blinds him to the consequences of his actions. His decision to abandon his family and career in pursuit of love leads to a series of misfortunes, including loss of social status, financial ruin, and ultimately his sense of self-worth. This ironic juxtaposition with Carrie, who



experiences societal ascent despite her own moral dilemmas, underscores the unpredictable nature of desire and its potential to upend lives. Dreiser's use of irony in Hurstwood's narrative serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the dangers of placing one's happiness solely in the hands of another, and ultimately challenges readers to contemplate the complexities of human relationships and the pursuit of fulfillment.

*Hurstwood, with a look that bore the weight of untold stories, began, "When I first laid eyes on you, I couldn't have fathomed how it would alter the course of my entire existence. At that juncture, I stood at the zenith of my career, surrounded by all conceivable comforts and successes".*

*Carrie, her voice tinged with a mixture of regret and tenderness, responded, "I am aware, and it was never my intention to cause you any harm. You've always believed that true happiness could be found in embarking on new ventures".*

*"Happiness", Hurstwood mused, the word leaving his lips like a sigh, "Yes... Yet here I stand, bereft of everything due to this so-called 'new beginning'. My profession, my family - everything dissipated into thin air".*

*"I deeply regret the turn of events," Carrie softly stated, her heart heavy. «Do you reckon you'd have been happier had our paths never crossed?"*

In a poignant exchange within "Sister Carrie," Theodore Dreiser masterfully depicts Hurstwood and Carrie confronting the bitter irony of their shared journey. Despite their initial aspirations for happiness and fulfillment, their paths have led to unexpected and devastating outcomes. This dialogue serves as a powerful conclusion to their tumultuous story, encapsulating the complexities of human desires and the unpredictable nature of fate. As Hurstwood and Carrie grapple with the harsh reality of their situation, their conversation brims with resignation and regret. They come face to face with the painful realization that their pursuit of love and happiness has only brought them suffering and disillusionment. Hurstwood, once esteemed and prosperous, now finds himself stripped of dignity, grappling with the consequences of his misguided choices. Carrie, too, confronts the harsh truth of her decisions, recognizing the unforeseen consequences of her desires. Through this exchange, Dreiser skillfully portrays the tragic irony of their circumstances. Despite their earnest longing for happiness, both Hurstwood and Carrie are ultimately betrayed by their own ambitions and yearnings. Their shared journey serves as a poignant testament to the complexities of human nature and the capriciousness of fate. Moreover, this dialogue underscores Dreiser's thematic exploration of the unpredictable nature of desire and the inherent risks inherent in the pursuit of happiness. Despite their best intentions, both characters find themselves at the mercy of forces beyond their control, highlighting the fragility and transience of human existence. In conclusion, this poignant exchange between Hurstwood and Carrie serves as a powerful culmination of their tumultuous journey. Through their shared disillusionment and regret, Dreiser invites readers to ponder the intricacies of human desires and the profound impact of fate on the trajectory of our lives.

In conclusion, the integration of psychology and irony in Theodore Dreiser's novel "Sister Carrie" offers a profound exploration of human nature, societal dynamics, and the pursuit of happiness. Through careful literary analysis, historical contextualization, and psychological examination, the novel unveils the complexities of characters' motivations, desires, and moral dilemmas. Dreiser's skillful use of irony illuminates the ironic twists of fate, where characters' pursuit of success and happiness often leads to unexpected consequences and inner emptiness. As exemplified by the characters of Carrie and Hurstwood, the novel

portrays the irony of social mobility, where material gains come at the expense of personal fulfillment. Ultimately, "Sister Carrie" invites readers to reflect on the intricacies of human relationships, the elusiveness of happiness, and the moral ambiguities inherent in the pursuit of ambition. Through its masterful blending of psychology and irony, the novel offers timeless insights into the human condition, making it a significant contribution to American literature.

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