

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English**



**A Memoire Submitted to the Faculty of Letters and Languages in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements For Master's Degree in English.**

Option: Comparative Literature

Subject:

***Determinism in Émile Zola's Nana (1880) and Theodore
Dreiser's Sister Carrie (1900)***

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Academic Year: 2013-2014

To my dear parents

To my dear sisters and brothers

To all my relatives and friends especially Slimane, Karim, Sabrina and Soraya.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Mohamed Amine KHOUDI for his guidance, advice and encouragement. I also owe special thanks to my teachers especially Pr. Dalila AREZKI who has been eager with us along our master studies and to all those who contributed to the fulfillment of my work.

Abstract

This work is a comparative study which explores the issue of determinism in Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). The aim of this study is to apply Herbert Spence's Social Darwinism relying on his book entitled *The Principles of Biology* (1864). Throughout this research, we have provided historical and literary overview of the two authors to make them more comprehensible and to link the two novels which are written in different times and locations. The following study concerns how the characters of the two novels are controlled by environmental determinism and heredity, so these forces trap the individual in both Zola's society under the Second French Empire and Dreiser's urbanized American society. Our discussion shows how Zola's *Nana* and Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* struggle in what Spencer coins as "*the Survival of the Fittest*" including other characters engagement in this conquest of life, as well as, the two heroines' desire to gain wealth, luxury and fame. Both of Nana and Carrie Meeber have failed in their struggle and lead many of their lovers to ruin or worse to death, so Nana ends in tragic death and Carrie feels unsatisfied and her life remains meaningless. Then, the two writers portray how every factor of individual's prevailing experience such as the state of birth which conditions his life and this justifies his behaviors and animal instincts including social environment which is in a constant movement, affects human life and imprisons him. Consequently, the affinities between the two writers reveal the influence of Emile Zola over Theodore Dreiser and the fact that both of them belong to naturalism as a movement, which first appeared in France and then extended to America. Indeed, this link makes possible this comparative study of both novels in the light of Social Darwinism.

Introduction

The issue of determinism has been very prominent in the nineteenth and twentieth century literary Naturalism. It was the belief that everything is under control of innate and outside forces and the individual has no free will to act beyond the influence of environment including human experiences. In the same view, the human beings were trapped in a changing universe where they cannot escape. In fact, naturalism as a literary movement appeared in France and first introduced by Émile Zola the French writer with the publication of his preface of the second edition of *Thérèse Raquin* (1868) and his later theoretical work *The Experimental Novel* (1893) in which he presented Claude Bernard's experimental method in a literary view. Besides, the influence of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution on his work was undeniable since he uses such scientific ideas in the social sphere of his novels which is adapted from the study of animal order. Later on, Naturalism was extended to America and associated with the works of Stephen Crane, Frank Norris and Henry James. Indeed, the movement dealt with the negative aspects of society such as sex, prostitution, poverty and crime.

The nineteenth century was marked by the most representative works such as Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) which was the ninth novel of The Rougon Macquart series which told the story of a The Rougon Macquart family throughout a cycle of twenty novels and this collection entitled *The Natural and Social History of a family under the Second Empire*. Accordingly, this period was also known as the Second French Empire ruled by Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's (known as Napoleon III) regime which was sinking in corruption and the dark moral values, so it was time of instability and injustice since Napoleon III banned all attempts to democratic governance.

Moreover, Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) portrayed life at the end of nineteenth century America which witnessed a deep change as a result of the industrial

Revolution, so the great cities such as New York and Chicago were growing rapidly. By the way, the economic boom in these cities was seen by the new comers from agrarian and rural areas as an opportunity for a better life and material success. However, new problems were emerged such as overpopulation, bad working conditions in factories, poverty in the slums, corruption and crime.

Review of the Literature

In recent years, the two novels have received a large bulk of criticism. To begin with, Émile Zola's *Nana*, Simon Sebag Montefiore in his journal article published in *The Mail on Sunday* (2013) claims that, "Émile Zola's novel *Nana*, about a 'grande horizontale' who rises and falls like the Second Empire itself".¹ More clearly, Montefiore in his historical view considers *Nana* as attaining the highest summit of success in the beginning, but at the end she falls to the bottom and this point is made as a historical parallel with the downfall of the Second Empire in France.

According to Marie-Anne Visoi (2012), *Nana*'s "sexual empowerment is visible from the start of the novel when her radiant beauty takes mythical proportions [...] Zola portrays his character as an "object of desire" and "man-eater".² In other words, the power of *Nana*'s sexual envy is very apparent from the beginning of the novel and her wonderful beauty is beyond the ordinary, Zola compares her to an object of desire and a beast which devours man. From this anthropological critic, *Nana*'s beauty and sexuality is considered as a threat for society.

Another critic of the novel is Steven Mclean in his article entitled "*The Golden Fly*": *Darwinism and Degeneration in Emile Zola's Nana* (2012), he observes "Nana inverts Darwin's explanation of sexual selection in human society, since her irresistible appeal provides her with the power of selection and disrupts the capacity for reason associated with the allegedly superior male intellect".³ That is to say, Zola's *Nana* is depicted in reverse to

Darwin's concept of sexual selection in social order. Indeed, her strong desire gave her the ability to select and dominate man's superiority despite the fact that they are best known for reason and intellect.

As for *Dreiser's Sister Carrie (1900)*, Larry W. Issac in a chapter published in Andrew Lawson's book entitled *Class and the Making of American Literature: Created Unequal (2014)* perceives that "Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is the story of young – working class woman's struggle with facets of life—work, morality, men and sexual relationships [...] Seeking a better life, the struggle begins as she moves from her rural hometown to Chicago".⁴ More explicitly, Dreiser's *Carrie* is a model of a young girl from a working social class who fights along the course of life; beginning from seeking a work, her later matrimonial relations with men and the corrupting moral values, yet *Carrie's* struggle starts with her mobility from her rural Columbia City to urbanized Chicago City through which she sees a better future.

Then, Cassuttu Leonard (2011) observes that "in its protagonist *Carrie Meeber*, Dreiser extends the scope of success narratives to include a protagonist who is not only female, but who also breaks contemporary conventions of sexual morality by living with first one and then a second man outside marriage".⁵ The prominence of *Sister Carrie* is justified by the treatment of gender issues and matrimonial relations which contradict the contemporary values.

Mary Hricko (2009) adds "Carrie resists leaving the city because she sees it as a place of great power and materialistic expense. Carrie learns that in order to survive the challenges of the urban world; she must maintain a self-centered all times".⁶ Obviously, *Carrie* tries as far as possible to stay in the city because she knows that it is a place which can offer to her much economic and material success, yet *Carrie* struggles to live in this environment of the urbanized city and she tries whatever it serves her own self.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

From the above mentioned critics, one can notice that the two novels, Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) have been treated from different perspectives, so the issue of determinism has been studied in the novels separately. However, no one has dealt with the issue in both of them in a single study, thus this research tends to fill this gap in a comparative study exploring this issue to show to what extent characters of Zola and Dreiser are determined by inner and social forces in the struggle of life.

To reach this purpose, I shall rely on the theory of Social Darwinism as explained by Herbert Spencer's book *The Principles of Biology* (1864). The appropriateness of this theory is justified by the fact that Spencer, after reading Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), adapted Darwinian Theory and applied it to society similarly as the natural laws originally constructed. He explores the struggle of men for existence including influences of environment and human background. Indeed, the discussion of these two points will show how characters in the two novels are determined by environment and heredity.

Methodological Outline

This comparative study will be divided into three sections. In the first one, I'll present the method and materials used to achieve this study. We will make a summary of the two novels Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). Then, concerning the method I shall use as a theoretical material Herbert Spencer's *The Principles of Biology* (1864) on Social Darwinism which seems appropriate to this research. The second section which is the results aims at giving the findings of the discussion. Finally, the discussion section will be organized into three chapters. In the first one, I shall provide the historical and literary background of the two novels to put this work in its context. As for the second chapter, I shall discuss Spencer's well-known phrase the "Survival of the Fittest"

including the notion of determinism by environment and heredity in relation to Émile Zola's characters in *Nana* (1880). The third chapter will be devoted to Spencer's "the Survival of the Fittest" including the issue of determinism and by heredity and environment in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). Indeed, I will conclude the discussion section with a synthesis which aims at showing the parallel points and the similarities by comparing the two novels Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900).

Method and Materials

Method

To deal with the issue of determinism in both novels of Emile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), we shall rely, as it is previously mentioned, on Social Darwinism which seems appropriate to our research. To make this theory more comprehensible, it is worth making a small sight to its origin and the discussion of the two main standpoints which deals with determinism by environment and heredity including "*the Survival of the Fittest*".

"*Social Darwinism*" is a modern expression given to the different theories that appeared in England and the United States in the late nineteenth century, which aims at applying the concepts of Darwinism to society. This era is best known for the emergence of many theories such as Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution (1859), Claude Bernard's Scientific Method (1865). However, the theory of Herbert Spencer's (1864) "*Social Darwinism*" is the major concern of this study since it explains how human life is set similarly as the one related to the animal order in nature.

This theory can be explained by the fact that social Darwinians always hold that view of social elite "might makes rights". In other words, this meaning gives the right to rich and the powerful to dominate and control the poor which is the weak and passive. Then, this results in social restriction and an environment only favorable for few individuals of power. "Some force which the organism habitually generates is too great or too small to balance some incident force; and there arises a residuary force exerted by the environment on the organism".⁷

However, these forces which control the individual are not only the result of environmental facts, but there is a universal fact which claims that the human beings inherit genetically and mentally some characteristic from their biological parents or ancestors. It is then, what is called heredity. In this context, Spencer states,

Heredity is universal. The various instances of heterogenesis lately contemplated, seem, indeed, to be at variance with this assertion. But they are not really so. Though the recurrence of like forms, is, in these instances, not direct but cyclical, still, the like forms do recur; and when taken together, the group of forms produced during one of the cycles, is as much like the groups produced in preceding cycles, as the single individual arising by homogenesis, is like ancestral individuals.⁸

Heredity offers the reproduction of similar individuals of the preceding human being as quite similar either on one cycle of this process or reproduced from the far ancestral model and this is what is meant by "*Homogenesis*". Besides, the process of reproduction of the similar individual or rather with the same characteristics is traced back to paternal model which is referred to "*instances of heterogenesis*".

Social Darwinism is that belief of society in which humans, like animals and plants in nature, compete in the struggle for existence; the strongest, or the fittest, survive and grow while the unfit is fated to die. Spencer notes, "Those individuals whose functions are most out of equilibrium with the modified aggregate external forces, will be those to die; and that those will survive whose functions happen to be most nearly in equilibrium".⁹

Moreover, Herbert Spencer is best known for coining the phrase of the "survival of the fittest" in his book *The Principles of Biology* (1964), after reading Charles Darwin's work *On the origin of Species*. The "survival of the fittest" mainly suggests natural selection, yet Spencer broadened the evolutionary theory into the fields of sociology and ethics. Also, he asserted that society is ruled by the struggle in which the weak are defeated by the stronger. According to him, the natural order of things cannot be altered by the interference of political or social acts. "This survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr. Darwin has called natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life".¹⁰ Furthermore, he proposes that society is the product of change from lower to higher forms. Indeed, in the last analysis, the social laws can be formulated similarly as the natural laws originally constructed. In this respect, Spencer writes,

“Let us suppose, then, that society has arrived at state of equilibrium like that of mature animal — a state not like our own, in which growth and structural development are rapidly going on; but a state of settled balance among the functional powers of the various classes”.¹¹

To conclude, this research paper attempts to discuss the main points of the theory of Social Darwinism such as determinism which is linked to both factors of heredity and environment, yet it explains the Spencer’s best known phrase “The Survival of the Fittest”. Indeed, this theory opens gateway from the natural and animal order to social and more complex of developed human state.

Discussion

Summary of Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880)

Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) is the one most controversial works of the nineteenth century French literature and its portrayal of the decent and corrupted life of Paris admirers and 'coquettes' sexuality such as Nana. She has been subject to a large polemic among the upper-class, as well as, the religious one, yet Nana rises from the gutter to moneyed higher - class and by the end she falls into her decent death.

Zola's mythic character Nana is an epitome of sex and an actress to whom all men can't resist and to her theatrical nudity which made her portrayal as a stunning prostitute. Her desire to money and sex with many of her lovers drives them to ruin and sometimes to death. In fact, her victims are plenty and among them Count Muffat de Veuville, Monsieur Steiner and Monsieur Leon Fauchery, so Count Muffat is a member of French government becomes foolish with Nana's beauty. Then, Monsieur Steiner is a significant German-Jewish Banker who admires actresses and spends huge amounts of money upon them and Nana is just one among others. Also Count Xavier de Vandevres, a typical gentleman who loses his money gambling on horses and spending much for Nana's luxury and ends with committing a suicide by burning himself along with his horses.

Nana, the monster of sexuality drives many of her partners to the downfall, she rises from the gutter to an actress known as the Blonde Venus in the Variety Theatre and her success is made from public growing admiration. Moreover, her desire for money is not satisfied and she takes the opportunity whenever it comes as the fact of having many sexual partners. Later on, Nana disappears suddenly from Paris circles and everybody is asking where she is, thus she is discovered dying of smallpox in one of Paris hotels and where people and actresses come to visit her, but there remains only her decent body lied on the bed.

To conclude, Nana has the power in her beauty and sexuality; she drove many of her admirers to madness, and invests her interests in her body. She is in fact, the decent prostitute

and the magical power of orgasm, but her rise is no longer enduring and she dies decently. Indeed, this fatalistic ending of Nana reflects the perversity of morals, the decaying and the corrupt society of the French Second Empire.

Summary of Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900)

Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) is one of the foremost works of American literary naturalism. It is a story of passion, adultery and desire. It depicts human relations which are superficial and the way individuals are controlled by their envy for material, money and luxurious life, so the writer grants much of this to his protagonist character Caroline Meeber or Carrie.

The novel opens with a young and attractive girl of much innocence and timidity; she is about eighteen years old and from middle-class family. In August, 1889, Caroline Meeber takes a train to Chicago leaving her parents' house in Columbia city. Fearful and inexperienced, she follows her way to this big city with a hope of getting a job and for a better life. Once in the train, she meets a young and a handsome salesman known as Charles Drouet. The man seems to Carrie handsome and wealthy in his fine clothes, and tells her that she is ought to go to Chicago where her sister Minnie is living, Drouet in his turn impressed Carrie with his way of talking and tells her about his travels and business. Indeed, Drouet left Carrie by asking about her address.

Then, Carrie is received by her sister Minnie Hanson who lives with her husband Sven and her baby in a modest flat. Later on, Carrie learns that she has to work to help her sister's expanses, so she starts looking for a job and after a hard time she succeeds to get something in a shoe factory. Thereafter, Carrie has a bad time during the cold winter and loses her job some time earlier. By this fact, she feels her weight to Minnie and her husband and decides to leave them and to join Drouet in his apartment. After awhile, the manager George Hurstwood pays a visit to the young couple and Carrie's Admiration for him grows. When Drouet was out of

town for work, George visited Carrie regularly. Later on, this scandal drives Hurstwood family to ruin and he falls in serious troubles with his wife Julia. One night, George is the last to leave his work place in Hannah and Hogs; to his surprise the money cases are unprotected and after much confusion he takes his decision to rob the safe. He plans his escape with Carrie by inventing the story of Drouet's injuries.

Moreover, Carrie and Hurstwood moved to New York City where they rent an apartment, but before going there he gives back much of the money he steals to avoid justice persecution and keeps some for making a small business. Unfortunately, Hurstwood's business is shrinking and the situation becomes worse. Hurstwood fails to get a job and has gone bankrupt, so Carrie loses interest in him and finds a job in a Chorus line where she is promoted and gains much money. Indeed, she leaves Hurstwood to his fate and now the former is starving in despair, so he put terms to his life by turning on the gas in his hotel chamber and commits a suicide.

To sum up, Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is both a story about some people who rise to the edge of society acquiring wealth and success while others are starving to death in the underworld of Nineteenth Century America. Thus, Caroline Meeber, George Hurstwood and Charles Drouet are the characters most portraying the corrupted moral values, adultery, scandals and matrimonial relations.

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Results and Discussion

In this part of our research, I shed light on the results reached after we have dealt with the issue of determinism in a comparative study of both novels Émile Zola's *Nana* (1800) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). Following this, as a theoretical material, I borrowed the ideas of social Darwinism articulating on Spencer's *The Principles of Biology* (1864), so to make this comparative study clear, I have provided a historical and a literary background of the two writers.

In the first chapter, I have noticed that both Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) arise from different literatures, but both of them share some historical similarities. In this chapter, I have drawn a historical parallel between France and the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth century. In fact, the influence of the Zola over Dreiser shows the appropriateness of our issue dealing with the two writers and since they represent the same literary movement. Indeed, the backgrounds of both novels and the analysis of the prominent periods marked in France and America, make this comparative study between the two novels Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) clear and more possible.

Then, in the second chapter, I have come to the result that Nana's struggle in what Spencer coins as "the Survival of the Fittest" has failed and her life ends with a dramatic death, so she is the product of a filthy environment and the offspring of *The Rougon Maquarts* family by which she inherits much of their prevailing qualities. Thus, she is determined by heredity and environment as it is the case of the other characters in the novel, yet most of them are driven by their passion and animalistic desire for sex and pleasure including the protagonists Nana.

Moreover, in the third chapter, I have deduced that the characters struggle in Spencer's account for "the Survival of the Fittest" or the fight for existence in the changes which occur

in society mainly the American urban one of the Nineteenth Century. Individuals are controlled by inner forces of heredity, instinct, desire and passion including outside forces of environment which make them unable to act bond their will. Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) is a story of rise and fall, for instance Carrie Meeber started from nothing and climbs to the hedge of society, while George Hurstwood begins from his luxurious life and respected position to lose everything in his tragic downfall.

Therefore, the affinities between the two writers Émile Zola and Theodore Dreiser prove that they are largely influenced by these scientific theories emerged in the nineteenth century including Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism which is adapted from Darwinian evolutionary theory to the state of human environment. Indeed, relying on this theory; it has been possible to discuss the issue of determinism in both novels. However, the similarities between the two writers and naturalism as their leading a movement make them sharing many affinities in which this works tries as far as possible to discuss by exploring the themes heredity and environmental determinism in the two novels, Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900).

To conclude, this comparative study has analyzed the issue of determinism in both novels Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) and the backgrounds provided about the two authors contributed to make this study more clear, we have concluded that the characters of both novels are engaged in what Spencer coins as "the Survival of the Fittest" and they are controlled by environmental determinism and heredity. Indeed, this study is achieved by applying the ideas of Social Darwinism which we have tried as far as possible to deal with in both novels.

Introduction

I have already mentioned that our comparative study aims at demonstrating the issue of determinism in Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). This issue is related to the major aspects of nineteenth century literary naturalism such as the forces which control the individual and makes him confront some facts such as the state of birth and social environment including individual struggle for existence. Following the ideas of Social Darwinism as initiated by Herbert Spencer, the last two chapters of this discussion will be devoted the issue of determinism in both novels, but after the one dealing with the background of both writers. The first chapter of this discussion explores the historical and literary background of two writers Emile Zola and Theodore Dreiser. However, the second and the third chapters tackle the notion of the "survival of the fittest" in both novels and how the powerful survives while the weak is fated to ruin and death in the society. In addition to that, the two chapters demonstrate social determinism in its both aspects environment and heredity and to what extents some characters' lives are controlled within these forces. Indeed, I shall finish by the affinities between the two novels, Émile Zola's *Nana* and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*.

Chapter One: Times and Life of Émile Zola and Theodore Dreiser

Emile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) arise from different literatures, but both of them share some historical similarities. In this chapter, we draw a historical parallel between France and the United States in the Nineteenth and Twentieth century. The influence of Zola over Dreiser shows the appropriateness of our issue dealing with the two writers since they represent the same literary movement.

To make a link between the two authors, it is worth studying the historical backgrounds of both. In fact, France in 1848 to 1870 was under the reign of Napoleon III and this period was known as The Second French Empire. As for *Sister Carrie's* context, the new

world between 1870 and 1900 was marked by a new era known as the Gilded Age and has brought huge social, political and economic changes. Indeed, the close periods of the two novels and their historical events go hand in hand with the emergence of naturalism first in France and lastly in America.

a) The Second French Empire:

The Second French Empire has its origins to Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte or Napoleon III coming back to France from exile in October 1836, he tried to imitate his uncle Napoleon I when he succeeded to escape from his exile in Elba Island in Italy and Napoleon's III aim was in the same way to take the throne from Louis XVIII. During Louis Philippe reign there was much social and political disorder and a competition for power was between the wealthy families which made the control of public institutions and the employment. Also, they were supporting the regime for the benefit of their social-class and to perpetuate their prosperity.

This was an elite possessing power through the control of the institutions of the state, and by means of the local social and economic power conferred by the ownership of property and control of access to employment and scarce resources. They supported a regime which had appeared fully committed to maintaining social order and the condition for continuing prosperity.¹

Indeed, the lower class was suffering from the economic crisis, poverty and political injustice.

In fact, Louis-Napoleon attempted to restore Napoleonic Empire and called upon local garrison to take part in his revolution, but the unexpected happened and the local troops arrested him and the king Louis Philippe of France exiled Louis-Napoleon to the new world. Later on, with his mother illness he returned to Switzerland, but soon after he was expelled from this country and he moved to England. Moreover, in 1839 he published his book entitled *Napoleonic Ideas* in which his ideal sought to favour social and industrial fields including trade and politically based to restore peace and set equal rights to people. Louis-Napoleon writes,

the Napoleonic idea is not an idea of war but a social idea – an industrial, commercial, humanitarian idea. If to some men it always seems to be surrounded by the thunder of combat, this is because indeed it was enveloped for too long in the smoke of cannon and the dust of battle. But today the clouds have vanished, and one can see beyond the glory of arms a civil glory which was greater and more lasting.²

In 1840 Louis-Napoleon attempted another *coup* but he was captured again and this time he was taken to trial and imprisoned in the town of Ham settled in the castle and there he wrote several articles in the newspapers against the regime. Then, in 1846 Louis-Napoleon succeeded to escape and ran to England again and in the same year he was the only legitimate heir of Bonaparte legacy after his father's death. He returned to France after the 1848's revolution and the collapse of Louis Philippe and on December the 2nd. Indeed, Louis-Napoleon appointed president with peasant support after the public outrage on the conservative laws.³

The Second French Empire was considered as a crucial part of the French history; Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's governance was seldom the same with his uncle Napoleon I, but quite different in setting the rules. It was the purpose of Napoleon III to keep justice and perpetuate peace in the French Republic. As a matter of fact, his "Napoleonic ideas" and his interests led him to neglect social and cultural issues. Admittedly, he was the supreme emperor and the unique representative of his people.

Louis-Napoleon has taken over the throne and appointed president of the French republic for a second term on December the 2nd, 1851 after a *coup d'état*, despite the fact that the constitution do not allow him to reelect for the second term, now he was the emperor Napoleon III after dissolving the National Assembly without having a legitimate right and arrested the opposition members of parliaments in a scandalous protest. The day after, the republicans revolted against the barricades in the popular areas and on December the 4th, 1851 the regime troops charged to maintain the order shoot over the crowd through most of them were a merely strolling people in Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle. Indeed, this resulted with

hundreds of innocent victims.⁴ Later on, Napoleon's III constant propaganda followed, so he established new press to widespread his name on the previous elections and to mirror his uncle's fame on his reputation. Natalie Isser claims on this subject,

There were apparently enough funds to start new newspaper: *Le napoleonien*, *Le petit caporal*, *Napoleon republicain*, *Le Bonapartiste*, *La Redingote grise*. In July there appeared *La gazelle nationale*, in August *Le peuple constituant*, in September *Les humanitaires*, and *Journal de Napoleon-Louis Bonaparte*, and in October *La presidence de Napoleon*, *L' aigle republicain*, and *La liberte*. The majority of these papers were small and usually carried a portrait of Napoleon I or the Prince.⁵

During Napoleon's III reign, there was no opportunity to public opinion or freedom of speech and the parliament was under his will. In addition to that, the press was subjected to high taxes and the publication of articles was surveyed including to some books that were censored. Indeed, those suspected to conspire against the emperor's regime were exiled without any trial.

As a matter of fact, some members of the educated class refused Napoleon's III despotic regime and among them some artists who were the founders of expressionist movement such as Monet, Renoir and Paul Cézanne . "Impressionism as a term wasn't coined until 1874, but the artistic currents that gave rise to it were extremely active throughout the Second Empire: Monet, Renoir and Cézanne began sharing ideas in 1860. The 1863 Salondes refuses, sanctioned by Napoleon III".⁶ Besides, some French writers such as Émile Zola, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Victor Hugo and Balzac were in the same attitude with the mentioned artists view. In this regard, Margaret Campbell notes,

"Again, it was flourishing. 1857 was a key year, with the publication of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Both caused a public outcry and resulted in court cases against their creators, but Flaubert got off more highly than the poet. Émile Zola described the seamy underside of Haussmann's glittering city in his novels, and Victor Hugo, who loathed Napoleon III, was in exile in the Channel Islands.⁷

From the above quotation, it's clear that these writers rejected the present situation of France and revolted against Napoleon's regime and his constitution. In addition to that, few of them were punished by law and exiled as the case of Flaubert, Emile Zola and Victor Hugo.

Napoleon was forced to make a transition from the authoritarian system to liberal one which resulted in the rising of social and political tension. However, this liberal system has known some success which made the regime to take a decision to go into war with Prussia, but Napoleon's III governance has come to an end after the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war at the Battle of Sedan and this failure led to the capturing of the emperor by the Germans. Indeed, the republicans declared in the national assembly the collapse of the Second Empire on September the 4th, 1870 and welcoming the Third Republic and Louis Napoleon-Bonaparte died on January, the 9th 1873 in Chislehurst, London, England.

To conclude, this is just a short background of the major facades of the Second French Empire from the glorious years of Napoleon's III until the downfall of his reign and this may make the historical facts more clear to study Emile Zola's *Nana* (1880), but I have to extend this background to Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) context in the following of this dissertation to make the link between the two writers.

b) The Gilded Age:

The Gilded Age was coined by Mark Twain and Dudley Warner with the publication of the book entitled *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873) and Seven Mintz observes that "period was glittering on the surface but corrupt underneath"⁸ which was meant that this Era was colored with a superficial layer of gold, but the bottom was unscrupulous and deceitful. It was mainly the period from 1870 to 1901 which came after The American Civil-war which brought incredible "change wrought by urbanization in the Gilded Age was dramatic shift from the predominance of rural values to urban values".⁹ Clearly, this was the transformation from a rural and agrarian state to an urban nation in succession with the closing of the

frontiers and economic growth. While the white settlers inhabited the open lands west of the Mississippi River and the Indians were into restricted reservation throughout the plains.

Some historians described the Gilded Age as “the Era of Excess and the Great Barbecue”.¹⁰ Furthermore, the great cities such as New York and Chicago were growing rapidly with the economic boom. As a response, an influx of immigrants flooded from Europe, China and Mexico to the new world with a dream of better life and material success. However, new problems were emerged; such as overpopulation, poverty in the slums, corruption and crime. Besides, these newcomers faced many barriers such as discrimination, hatred and Anti-Semitism. By contrast, there is a growth of what was known as nativism and some minorities such as Jews, Poles, Mexicans, and Asians were hardly integrated among the workers for the factor of language, yet they could only work in the same members of their communities.¹¹

In fact, it was time where the industry was ruled by the Robber Barons who were the only to get the benefit and the rich got richer while the poor got poorer. Then, the great cities such as New York and Chicago became world’s extremes; in one side lived the millionaires and on the other side live immigrant families in tenements. In the merit of modern economy, a national transportation and communication network was created and the corporation became the dominant form of business organization. By the beginning of the twentieth century, “The industrialization of the United States [...] surpassed France and Great Britain as the world’s leader in industrial production”¹² and the annual income of the industrial production in the United States exceeded that of any other country except Britain. Henceforth, bad working conditions in factories favored low wages which led many workers to form labor unions despite the strong opposition from the owners of industries.

Moreover, workers “also endured pay cuts and lay offs during bad times and long periods of unemployment during depressions. By the late 1880s, strikes protesting such conditions had become almost constant”.¹³ In other terms, workers were sent away by their employers when they were sick or injured for instance and without any right of work insurances and their wages were reduced, thus they were subjected to long hours of work. This led the workers to go on regular strikes by the late nineteenth.¹⁴

This era is described by Charles W. Calhoun as, “Failings of character may have been especially prominent in the age, but they are part of life in every age. In any case, they could hardly account for the Era’s deep-seated, widespread changes in the economy and business system”.¹⁵

In the political sphere, there was the emergence of new problems from the monopolies and big business.

“the vast financial and political influence of these businesses over American life gave rise to the predominant issue in the politics of the era: should the government impose regulations to curb the power of these vast financial interests, or should it maintain the policy of Laissez Faire, or minimal government interference, and allow business free rein?”¹⁶

More clearly, the rulers of the great industries have an extreme influence on the American lives in many fields and this led to the new issues such as setting new norms on the industries to limit their control or letting the business ruled freely, that is to say, ‘Laissez Faire’. In addition to this, the Gilded Age was characterized by the contest between the Republicans and Democrats and also there was an initiative which sought reforms. For instance, The Civil Service Act sought to limit government control by requiring laws for certain jobs as sitting competitive examinations including The Interstate Commerce Act which sought to end discrimination in the railroads. Indeed, the Sherman Anti-trust outlawed business monopolies.

In the literary field, it is noticeable that social changes from rural state to urbanized era are the major concern of many novels. In fact, these radical changes were carried out in the

works of naturalism and realism. For instance, Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) and among them Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) which is the concern of this research. These novels treated social issues such as poverty, social class, corrupted business, and the conspicuous way of this age.¹⁷

To sum up, the Gilded age was a turning point in the American history and brought much change in all fields including Literary, economic, social and political. From this, it is worth making a highlight of naturalism which is extended from Europe to America in the heart of this upheaval. Indeed, this primordial point will be discussed in the following of this work.

Early Naturalism:

Naturalism as literary movement first appeared in France with publication of the two prefaces by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt in the novel *Germinie Lacerteux* (1864) and Émile Zola's second edition of *Thérèse Raquin* (1868). Later on, he made his literary and scientific method known with his *Experimental Novel* (1880). Zola has coined the term Naturalism and "claims that society acts like a living organism and that spirit is determined by its environment. Naturalism believes that literature and art are ruled by the same laws as natural sciences".¹⁸ In other words, Zola's appropriation of the experimental method shows that he was largely influenced by Claude Bernard's ideas in his work *An Introduction to the Study of experimental Medicine* (1865) and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Zola considered himself as "a scientific observer of the truths of experience that others have agreed neither to see nor to record".¹⁹

One cannot speak of Emile Zola's career without hinting his intervention on the Dreyfus Affair which is a controversial event in the French history until today. Admittedly, Alfred Dreyfus was a French- Jewish officer who was suspected of working with the

Germans. However, there was no evidence of this and Dreyfus was sentenced to prison in exile, so this merely was the fact of Anti- Semitism. As a result, Zola published his well-known article in L'Aurore daily which is entitled "J'accuse" on January 13th by which he has made many accusations for a number of army officers including their crimes and injustices. Then, he raised the issue concerning Dreyfus which was condemned unfairly, by this Zola has risked his career and his life. Moreover, he was excluded from the list of The Legion of Honor and fled to England, but this article has brought to him more fame. For his contribution in literature and his autonomous attitudes, Zola has received the Nobel Prize in literature twice in 1901 and 1902.²⁰

In fact, Zola inherited from his predecessor Balzac and Flaubert who were representing the same movement. Besides, he has rejected romantic idealism and revolted against the political conditions and the despotic system of Napoleon III under the Second French Empire. Moreover, Zola observed that truth should be reached by adopting scientific rules and was against some Christian beliefs which he saw that they were corrupting social life and individual mind. Furthermore, Emile Zola in the Rougon-Macquart tells the story of a family in a cycle of twenty novels and this collection subtitled *The Natural and Social History of a Family under the Second Empire* and introduced some theoretical words related to naturalism such as the notion of the "crowd" which was vehicled by intolerance in his *L'oeuvre* (1886)²¹ and the notion of "human beast" and "human vice"²² in *La Bête Humaine* (1890) and *Thérèse Raquin* (1867), "a naturalist observing "the human beast" in its mindless progress toward self degradation, and a puppeteer jerking lost souls"²³.

In Zola's writings, characters most of time were common people from lower-class, ill-educated and their lives were governed by forces of heredity, instinct and passion. In addition to this, they were portrayed by their animal desires to sex, the superficial matrimonial relations and the corrupted morals, yet their attempt to go beyond these forces which control

their existence has always been failed. As for most of the protagonists, they were oriented to fatalistic ending. In this context, Zola's *Nana* (1880) embodied much of these mentioned characteristics, and which will be discussed in Naturalism as a movement in America.

Naturalism in America:

American Naturalism emerged around the 1890s to early 1850s and inherited from Zola's legacy and as a result of the influence of the nineteenth century development of science and philosophy mentioning Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin's ideas. Eric Carl Link defines literary Naturalism as "the phrase used to describe the thematic exploration, in American Literature, of concepts arising out of post-Enlightenment developments in science and philosophy".²⁴ The movement was associated with a number of writers including Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Henry James and William Dean Howells among others. In fact, the writings of the mentioned novelists depicted life of middle and lower-class life and environmental forces which control the individual, yet naturalists grant attentions to experience and rejected the ideal state sought by their predecessors, the romantics. Then, the central themes in the literary works of this period tackled the decent life in the slums where the immigrants lived and the growing desires of those wealthy men and managers over the commonly portrayed country girls. Donald Pizer observes,

American writers were moved by an excitement born for discovering meaning and form for themselves when they began, in the 1890s, to write the twisted and meager life of immigrants slum dwellers, of the easy slide into the illicit by young country girls in the city and middle aged bar managers desiring young country girls, and the daily grind yet potentially violent upheavals of lower middle-class existence.²⁵

Fiction was portraying sex, adultery affairs between married men and women, waste values, crimes and most of time characters committed suicides or subjected to fatal ending. For instance, Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) were best known for these themes.

Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) was not less than this, it was a best example of naturalism through which his characters were put into experience and his observation upon them assumed that they were a product of environment and controlled by outside forces. Indeed, Dreiser created his landscape by the urbanized cities and put his character to this "laboratory experiment".²⁶

Conclusion:

It is true that Émile Zola and Theodore Dreiser emerged from different literatures, but the study of their historical and literary backgrounds reveals that both writers share common characteristics, starting from the rise of naturalism in France in the 1864 and its extension to the New World beginning from the 1890 and the political and economic sphere of both countries favored the rise of this movement.

First, Émile Zola was considered as the father of naturalism in his novel *Nana* (1880) he portrayed his middle and lower class characters in a decent life where they were controlled by forces of heredity, passion and social decay. Zola gave an account of social life under the Second French Empire and Napoleon's III despotic system. As for *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser put his characters into experience in which he observed that they were a product of environment and outside forces. Indeed, the Gilded age with the growth of the cities and urbanization raised new problems which highly reflected in *Sister Carrie* (1900).

Consequently, after the study of the historical and literary backgrounds of both novels and the analysis of the prominent periods marked in France and America including the Second French Empire, the Gilded Age, and Naturalism in both countries, a comparative study between the two novels Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) becomes clear and more possible.

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- ²⁵ Pitzer, *Theory and Practice of American Literary Naturalism*, 19.
- ²⁶ "Laboratory experiment" was Zola's adaptation of Claude Bernard's experimental method which he introduced to his novels. In his later publication he made his scientific method more known with his theoretical work *The Experimental novel* (1893).

Chapter Two: Determinism in Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880)

This chapter aims at studying Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) in relation to Herbert Spencer's phrase "the Survival of the Fittest" or individuals struggle for existence including the forces of heredity and environment which determine men within the French society in the nineteenth century as it is portrayed in *Nana* (1880). The novel is considered as a significant work of naturalism in France and for its concern with social issues, so it is worth analyzing the characters and their experiences in society.

To begin with, in Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) some characters shift from lower to higher scale and others moved from upper-class and to fall down into decent life. For instance, Nana rises from the streets of Paris to become an actress under the role Blonde Venus at the Théâtre des Variétés and with her erotic beauty she succeeds to gain fame, money and the luxury she dreams of, so by selling her body to the devil and having many sexual relations with her admirers of different social classes she attempts to achieve her goals. Irene Gammel (1994) states "in Zola's fiction, sex crosses class boundaries (men of all social classes have access to Nana's body)".¹

Nana is controlled by some forces which are beyond her will such as heredity, human instinct and environmental effects, so she has no experience with theater, but she will find how to manage herself; the Manager Mr. Bordenave exclaims, "Nana has something else, dammit, and something that takes the place of everything else. I scented it out, and it smells damnably strong in her, or else I have lost my sense of smell... You'll see, you'll see; she'll only have to appear and the whole audience will be hanging out their tongues".² That is to say, the manger explains that Nana cannot act and sing perfectly, but she has something which makes her power for the public, and this is the mysterious thing which Bordenave smells in her, thus it is meant by Nana's nudity and sexuality. In this regard, Marta L. Wilkinson (2008) notes, "Though it cannot be proven or measured, the power of sexual desire that Nana represents is

very real, of a nature all its own, generating an independent force”³. In other words, it is undeniable that Nana’s power and strengths lay in her sexual beauty by which all men succumb.

Then, Nana is determined by her passion for sex and through which she makes her influence, Zola says “All of a sudden, in the good-natured child the woman stood revealed, a disturbing woman with all the impulsive madness of her sex, opening the gates of the unknown world of desire. Nana was still smiling, but with the deadly smile of a man-eater”.⁴ That is to say, Nana has an extreme desire for sex and this animalistic instinct leads Zola to compare her to a beast which devours men, so this involves with animal instincts which occurs in the same way in the inherent human civilized state. In this view of human inner and instinct predispositions, Herbert Spencer (1864) states,

“Subjective psychology deals with *the sensations, perceptions, ideas, emotions, and volitions* that are or the direct and *indirect concomitants of this visible adjustment inner to outer relations—considers these several kinds of consciousness in their genesis, and their connexions of co-existence and succession*” (emphasis added)⁵

More clearly, human psyche involves with the individual thinking, feeling, emotion and his ability to take decisions which are expected and unexpected and this moderator to inner and outer influences make part of human mind and their outside factors.

Zola’s heroine is introduced to Théâtre des Varietés as the role of Blonde Venus and at first sight one can notice that her singing is not perfect and her tone is too bad, yet she is unfamiliar with the stage “her manager had been right: she certainly sang like a trombone. What is more, she didn’t even know to deport herself on the stage”.⁶ It is true that Nana is not fascinated with music and theatre and “herself seemed to be admitting with a wink that she had no talent at all, but that didn’t matter, because she had something else”.⁷ More clearly, this something is the magical power of sex in which she seduces all men and make them desired

her. Indeed, her first performance in the operetta as Venus made her fame through all Paris, by this she has to secure her life as a flaming actress.

According to Spencer, “a species so multitudinous its powers as mankind and above all does it seem to be so with such of human powers as have minor shares in aiding *the struggle for life* — the *aesthetic faculties for example*” (emphasis added).⁸ From this quotation, the human being has many abilities which help in their the individual affirmation in life and among them physical beauty, so this factor helps with Zola’s protagonist and it is apparent that her narcissistic beauty and her sexual body are at the edge of Nana features.

In these terms, Zola’s protagonist has a significant success in the Théâtre des Variétés the day before and after this triumph a crowd of men descended upon the house where she lives; in the Boulevard Haussmann to see her in admiration and thirst for her sexual beauty. Nana is disturbed by this large presence of men who want to see her and because of people’s gossip about her charming beauty. She exclaimed, “Nana revenged herself for the trouble people were causing to her by cursing the male sex under her breath [...] They’re filthy pigs, and they like that sort of thing”.⁹ Nana’s distress is clear and she compares those people who speak about her and this crowd of men to dirty pigs, so this also symbolizes animal behavior which is attributed to human nature.

Admittedly, the animal instinct controls the individual and makes him behave in the same way of animal nature and in relation to situations of danger or desire to sex for instance.

In this regard, Herbert Spence claims,

Escape from enemies supposes motions with the organism, related in kind and rapidity to mention without it. Destruction of prey requires a particular combination of subjective actions, fitted in degree and succession to overcome a group of objective ones. And so with those countless automatic processes exemplified in works on animal instincts.¹⁰

More explicitly, Spencer explains that in animal order the feeling of danger of enemy raises a quick movement in the animal, yet to kill a prey it needed some kind of constant subjective

deeds to take over the objective ones. Indeed, these mechanical steps are found in observations on animal instincts.

In addition to Nana, borrowing the ideas of Herbert Spencer, Zola created his male characters in the qualities of animal instincts, so he broadened this view of animal order to the civilized state of man including behaviors, desires and sex. For instance, George Hugon the little boy of seventeenth inhabits these qualities, Zola notes, “George himself, very tipsy and very excited by the sight of Nana, had been solemnly nursing a plan to get on all fours under the table, and go and curl up at Nana’s feet like a puppy.”¹¹ Obviously, George innate desire for Nana makes of him an animal-like who crawls like a dog under her feet.

Moreover, Zola’s Count Bismarck is portrayed in an animal state similarly to George Hugon,

Where upon Laborette, keeping a perfectly straight face, told her some fantastic stories: this fellow Bismarck was in the habit of eating raw meat, and when he met a women near his lair he would carry her off on his back; the result was that at the age of forty he had already had thirty-two children.¹²

From the above quotation, the Count Bismarck has sexual relations with many women and fathers a lot of children including his eating manner resemble to animal behaviors.

In fact, the writer informs the reader that Nana has got a small child whose name is Louis and she had him with an unknown stone-mason who is unkind with her, “there now!” said her aunt. “They maintained you’d had him by a stone-mason who was forever beating you”.¹³ Nana’s worries are because of her son who is kept in a nursery, “But Nana greatest cause of distress is her little Louis, a child she had when she was sixteen, and who had been left in the care of nurse in a village near Rambouillet”.¹⁴ By this quotation, it is clear that Nana’s conditions pushes her to look for alternatives to pay the nursery and her son’s fees, and above all to make a living, yet what is shocking is that Nana gives birth to her son only at sixteenth. Also, Nana’s aunt Madame Lerat claims about her that she “had always lived decently, and now it was enough for her to have found her again in a fine position”¹⁵, so this

shows that Nana is living in difficulties since a long period of time and now she is a little bit better.

Nana is born in hard conditions and raised in the streets of Paris. As a matter of fact, her mother Gervaise dies after successive failures and she turns to prostitution and alcoholism in her lifetime and this is portrayed in Zola's novel *L'Assommoir* (1877) which is one of the Rongon Maquarts series. Although the novel is not the subject of this study, but it is worth drawing Nana's origin which makes clear the fact that she has inherited some qualities from her mother Gervaise. Admittedly, Nana's hardships lead her to prostitution and her decent death is not really different from her mother's one. In this respect, Herber Spencer points that heredity makes parents transmit some of their qualities to their new born children. In this regard, Spencer asserts, "the other is the limitation of heredity by sex as the parent possessing these peculiarities to offspring of the same sex as the parent possessing these peculiarities".¹⁶ To reinforce this view, Laura Otis (1994) argues, "Zola's Nana, which follows the life of Gervaise's prostitute daughter, emphasizes the metaphor of heredity as disease, giving it a feminine character. Here the sorceress whose entrails ooze poison comes to life."¹⁷ It is meant that Gervaise transmits her characteristics to her daughter Nana which makes of her so similar to her mother and they also have the same the tragic ending.

Zola's heroine struggles to live in the hardships of Paris life and poverty which drives her to turn to prostitution, so in strange meeting a well-dressed lady Madame Tricon in a countess look comes to her confidently and arranges one of her affairs, " 'I have got someone for you today....Are you agreeable?' 'Yes....How much?' 'Twenty louis' 'At what time?' 'Three o'clock....It's agreed then?' 'It's agreed' ".¹⁸ In this underworld, Nana finds herself pushed to sold her body to devil in order to have a little sum of money which helps in maintaining herself permanently, so she is portrayed as a typical prostitute. Vincenzo Ruggiero (2003) argues that, "Nana is in urgent need of some money, and when Madame Tricon drops

by she pretends to be ignorant of the nature of the woman's relations with ladies in financial difficulties. An unspecified appointment at three o'clock, arranged by Madame Tricon, would bring to Nana the needed sum".¹⁹ That is to say, the appointment which Madame Tricon arranges with this unknown man provides Nana with some money regardless the type of its source.

Actually, Nana organizes a party in conspicuous environment and Zola described such a scene in which a mob of people gather in eating table dining, discussing, gossiping, and drinking, yet Nana by this party wants to gain respect and to show off through her name. However, she fails especially and when some fights between her guests happen, she is in grief for this. For instance, in one of the scenes she was with the Comte Xavier de Vandeuves, Zola states, "come now, my dear," said Vandeuves familiarly, 'you've had far too much to drink. Be reasonable.' No, she wouldn't budge. She meant to stay where she was. 'I may be tipsy — that's quite on the cards. But I want people to show me a bit of respects'.²⁰ In other words, Nana weeps from people's behavior and Comte de Vandeuves tries to calm her, so she tells him may be she is drunk now, but she wants people to respect her. Indeed, in this crowd scene it is apparent that social environment makes an influence over the characters and it is remarkable how public relations are vulgar and to what extent moral values are really weak. In this regard, Spencer notes, "Seing, then, that in all cases we may consider the external phenomena as simply in relation, and the internal phenomena also as simply in relation; *the broadest and complete definition of life will be— The continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations*".²¹ In other words, Spence's definition of life is based on to this constant change of internal relation which is meant the individuals to the external relations, which is meant by the environmental forces which make influence on men.

Then, it is worth mentioning that the individuals are submitted to the law of the Survival of the fittest which is a central element in the French society. In this view, Spencer states,

“ Now it is unquestionably true that, other things equal, each of these attributes, giving it's possessors an extra chance of life, is likely to be transmitted to posterity. But there seems no reason to suppose that it will be increased in subsequent generations by natural selection. *That it may be thus increased, the individuals not possessing more than average endowment of it, must be more frequently killed off than individuals highly endowed with it; and this can happen only when the attribute is one of great importance*” (emphasis added).²²

The above quotation suggests that life offers more opportunity to grow and survive for the individuals possessing more power, and those who are less powerful or the unfit are fated to be eliminated in natural order of life. For example, when the Prince of Scotland visits the theatre everybody is interested in the event including Mr Bordenave the manager of the theatre, his actress Nana, and the audience.

The Prince had just expressed a desire to complement Nana in her dressing-room, during the interval. But as he was leading them into the wings, the stage-manager went by. ‘Find those bitches Fernande and Marie for me!’ Bordenave cried angrily. Then, calming down, and trying to assume the dignified expression of a heavy father, he wiped his face with his handkerchief and added: ‘I am going to receive His Highness’.²³

It must be noted, that the manager gave much importance to the Prince; he even shout on the actresses and calls them absurdly as prostitutes in his stress, but later he calms himself to receive his “Highness”, the Prince of Scotland. Also, with regard to Nana the Prince is also impressed of her acting and with his desire to her; he seems to be under Nana’s feet too. Nana has power over everybody including Steiner, Bordenave, Muffat, George Hugon and Vandevres all of them struggle for Nana.

The atmosphere of the Théâtre des Variétés shows how are the relations of these French couples are corrupted, so most of wives have lovers and husbands have mistresses and also they grant much importance for personalities and well- positioned men which are the standards of wealth and power. Indeed, there is no space for the poor. In fact, society appears as a jungle

in nature; everybody wants to go with the one he desires without any moral value. For instance, Madame Rose Mignon has a relation with the journalist Monsieur Fauchery and she dares even to kiss him publicly and in front of her husband in one of the scenes “good evening, Baby, said Fauchery, kissing her familiarly. This was his revenge. Mignon did not even seem to notice this kiss, for everybody kissed his wife in the theatre” .²⁴ In addition to this, Nana is viewed as the goddess love in theater and the epitome of sexual desire in the real role, yet she throws a magical thrill over all men. In this respect, Janet Beiser comments, “we can hardly ignore the many scenes in which Nana, sex goddess and bed partner of an empire, undresses before a mirror or strips for her lovers; nor can we forget that she nightly displays herself to the theater audiences as she stars in performance of her nudity”.²⁵ By this quotation, Beiser declares that Nana is like a property of all the nation or the Empire and compares her to the goddess of sex which undress to every man, thus her power resides in her theatrical nudity which she performs to her audience .

Besides, all men are engaged in the law of “the Survival of The fittest” and they all compete fiercely about Nana. By the way, she selects her lovers and goes with the one who gives her more money than the other, so she eliminates the unfit such as Steiner who spends a lot about her and he even offers her a country house, and when he falls in financial troubles Nana abandons him. Zola claims, “[Nana] she would explain, in a reasonable tone of voice, that she did not want to turn him out like a dog, after all [Steiner] he has spent on her” (emphasis added).²⁶ Nana knows that Steiner is no longer able to support her financially, so she doesn’t want to chase him out of her life in a direct way after what he has done for her, but it is clear that she is not interested in him anymore. Nana after getting what is needed; she leaves her lovers in ruin. Zolaclaims,

“A lot of good it had done with her to be the mistress of men of wealth and position! She had cleaned out the Prince and Steiner to satisfy her childish caprices, and yet she has no idea where the money had gone”.²⁷

Moreover, the Comte Muffat does not miss this struggle for Nana and falls in the same fate as the banker Steiner, his worries with his unfaithful wife and his misadventure with Nana are destroying his life gradually. Zola claims

Muffat sat looking at her. She frightened him. The news-paper had dropped from his hands. In that moment of clarity and truth, he despised himself. Yes, that was it: she had corrupted his life, and he already felt tainted to the core of his being, by undreamt-of impunities. Now everything was going to rot within him, and for a moment he realized how this evil would develop; he saw the havoc wrought by this ferment, himself poisoned, his family destroyed, a section of social fabric cracking and crumbling. And unable to take his eyes away, he stared at Nana, trying to fill himself with disgust for her nakedness.²⁸

Now, the Comte Muffat who is a devoted catholic is looking to Nana’s nakedness with much anxiety for the fact that she has destroyed what is most valued to him; his life, his family, yet she has poisoned him with her corrupted world of sex and desire; he feels that her evil touched him physically and morally. Indeed, the Comte Muffat fails in struggle of life and abandoned by Nana to his fate, thus the Comte struggle ends here and Nana’s passion continues in ruining other men after taking her profit.

Furthermore, George Hugon is another victim of Nana; he is an innocent boy with a heart of child who allows himself to her charms and sexuality, but she betrays him with his brother Philippe. Nana has ruined the two at the same time and her animalistic desire devoured them both, so her demands for Philippe puts him in jail because of the money he took from the army for her benefit and George injures himself with scissors, later on he dies. Zola portrays Nana in an image of human beast which has a mysterious force, he notes, “she was the Golden Beast, a blind force, whose very odour corrupted the world”.²⁹ He adds, “giving herself to friends or passer-by, like a good natured animal, born naked”.³⁰

Similarly, the Comte Xavier de Vandevres has been ruined by Nana and other women through by whom he has been spending a huge fortune, so he loses much money and his debts lead him to count on his last chance in the race for the Grand Prix de Paris. However, his horse Lusingnan loses and his fortune collapses. Indeed, he puts terms to his life by committing a suicide, Zola states,

“ Labordette let out a a low murmur of incredulity. For his part he did not believe that Vandevres was dead. Somebody has sworn that he had seen him escaping through a window. He had set fire to his stables in a fit of madness, and as soon as it had started getting really hot it must have sobered him up. A man who had been such a fool about women, and so utterly worn out, couldn't possibly die as bravely as that.³¹

In other words, Zola informs that Vandevres tragic death is the fact that he set fire on his stable and himself is inside, so Labordette is sorry for him and he wishes if he had a different death for such a man who has madness for women.

Zola's male characters are doomed to failure in the “Survival of the Fittest” and most of them are destroyed by Nana. In this perspective Zola sums up,

There was the raging holocaust in which Vandevres had died, the melancholy which had taken Foucamont to the china seas, the financial disaster which reduced Steiner to living like an honest man, the satisfied imbecility of la Faloise, the tragic ruin of the Muffats, and the white corpse of Georges, over which Philippe was now watching, for he had come out of prison the day before. She had finished her labour of ruin and death.³²

Zola has illustrated how his characters failed to rise beyond their will and listed them through their disastrous ruin including Vandevres death, Foucamont vanishing in the china sea, Steiner Financial disaster which put him to modesty, La Faloise get enough of nonsense, the death of George which is followed by the releasing of Philippe. By this, Nana is responsible for the ruin and the death of her lovers following her quest for desire and wealth. In this regard, Holis Clayson (2013) claims, “Zola seeks to maximize the difference between the women and the man through the transformation of Nana into an evil force, one that will damage or even destroy the whole social and economic order by unsettling it's topmost stratum”.³³ In

other words, Nana destroys all the wealthy man and individuals of position without any pity and in this way she show's that women have control and power over men.

Indeed, Nana succeeds to become a mythic power and she is praised by everybody even in the foreign countries, yet her considerable fortune gathered everywhere and in different places in the globe from her lovers; becomes a subject by which all people in Paris talk about, Zola claims, "she took on the mysterious radiance of an idol laden with precious stones. People now spoke her without laughing, full of a dreamy respect for this fortune she has acquired among the barbarians".³⁴ Nana reaches the apogee of fame, money and sex, still she is not satisfied; she comes from an underworld which rises in her the corrupt instincts of human kind, yet she herself struggles in "the Survival of the Fittest" and she does the oldest work of human civilization which is prostitution, so she is forced to make money to live and feed her baby. Thus, she loses her baby Louise and finished in a decent death by catching the small-pox from him. Zola notes,

and around this grotesque and horrible mask of death, flowed in a stream of gold. Venus was decomposing. It was as if the poison she had picked up in the gutters, from the carcasses left there by roadside, that ferment with which she had poisoned a whole people, had now risen to her face and rotted it.³⁵

From this quotation, Nana or the theatrical actress Venus lays in the bed of death in a shabby body and Zola's claims that her illness is as poison that she gets from the gutter and the dirty streets, so she poisons all people and now it is spread in her own face and degenerates it.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Nana's struggle in what Spencer coins as "the Survival of the Fittest" has failed and her life has come to end with her dramatic death, so she is the product of a filthy environment and the offspring of *The Rougon Maquarts* family by which she has inherited much of their prevailing qualities. Thus, she is determined by heredity and environment as it is the case of the other characters in the novel, yet most of them are driven by their passion and animalistic desire for sex and pleasure. Indeed, this work attempts to relates Émile Zola's *Nana*

to the ideas of Social Darwinism as explained by Herbert Spencer in his theoretical work *The Principles of Biology*, so by the view that social life is set similarly as the animal order in nature functions.

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Third Chapter: Determinism in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900)

The present chapter deals with the issue of determinism in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) and examines the characters in relation to the two main standpoints, environment and heredity. In addition to that, it explores Spencer's well-known phrase "the Survival of the Fittest" by studying the novel in relation to social context.

To begin, one should relate the characters to their social environment and their prevailing experiences such as the state of birth. For instance, Caroline Meeber or Sister Carrie is born in a middle-class family and a modest environment of Columbia city, so she is confronted to poverty and a lack of job opportunities there. By this, she plans to join her sister in Chicago city, seeking to change her situation and with a dream of better life conditions. In this view, Herbert Spencer (1864) notes,

We saw that life presents simultaneous changes; and that the more elevated it is, the more marked the multiplicity of them. Well, besides countless phenomena of coexistence in the environment, there are often changes occurring in the same moment; and hence increased correspondence with it, supposes an increased display of simultaneous changes in the organism. (emphasis added)¹

The above quotation suggests that life is a project of constant changes which produce its diversity and it is confronted to many phenomena happening in the environment, yet the actual changes have instantaneous influences on the individual.

In this sense, Carrie's mobility will be subjected to many changes produced by an altering environment of Chicago city. Dreiser states, "To be sure she was not conscious of any of this. *Any change, however great*, might be remedied. There was always the next station where one might descend and return. There was the great city, bound more closely by these very trains which came up daily" (emphasis added).² Carrie will move into a different environment which she doesn't know before and experiences changes in urbanized city that she will travel by train.

One can notice that Carrie is born in poor milieu of middle class society, so she is controlled by the forces of biological determinism. Besides, she is instinctively owning this desire to material things, yet inexperienced, she is interested in her beauty and prompt to discover this new life which she sees in her dreams about this strange city of Chicago. “And yet she was interested in her charms, quick to understand the keener pleasures of life, ambitious to gain in material things. A half- equipped little knight she was, venturing to reconnoitre the mysterious city and dreaming wild dreams of some vague”.³

Carrie faces other expectations in Chicago City which change her way of life and lead her to experience the hardships of this environment. Carrie finds herself in an unknown city where she has to find a job to make a living and to help her sister. Minnie is living with her husband Mr. Hanson and their baby, all in a small flat and once Carrie is received there; she understands clearly that she has to work to pay her rent and to help her sister reducing her expanses. Hanson claims, “the rent of the flat was only seventeen dollars a month, and with her [Carrie] paying four each week, he figured out that it would not be a bad investment”. (emphasis added) ⁴ For Hansons consideration , Carrie has to pay her rent each week if she wants to stay with them. Also, she learns that she cannot go to theater or such beautiful places because her sister’s class doesn’t belong to those people who entertain themselves and enjoy having pleasures which cost much money. After many troubles, she finds a job in a shoe factory and stars working. The conditions there are so bad for her and by the coming of the cold winter she has a bad time since her clothes are inadequate for this situation. Indeed, Carrie is always determined by the environment either in Columbia or in Chicago, so even there she finds herself controlled by social forces which are beyond her will and she cannot surrender. In this respect, Keith Newlin argues, “In Dreiser’s classic naturalistic novel *Sister Carrie*, for instance, the protagonist Carrie Meeber, along with her lovers Drouet and Hurstwood, are oblivious to surrounding forces that influence their behaviors”.⁵ Obviously, It

is clear that Dreiser's characters are determined by the environment around them. For instance, Charles Drouet is controlled by his passion, and this inner state pushes him to develop a strong desire for women, this feeling which comes from jealousy and delight and, yet it nourishes envy. Dreiser notes, "It was not for the wellspring of human passion. A real flame of love is a subtle thing. It burns a well-o'-the-wisp, dancing onward to fairy lands of delight. It roars as a furnace. Too often jealeosy is the quality it feeds".⁶

In addition to Carrie, the two male characters George Hurstwood and Charles Drouet both oriented to environmental determinism and heredity. In fact, Mr. Hurstwood abandons his family in pursuit for love and sex with a young girl of eighteen, but his adventure will bring his destruction and downfall. Hurstwood's passion, madness and worries with his family drive him to escape with Carrie to New York and above all he steals his employers' s money. Dreiser claims, "he decided he would take them. Yes, he would, he would put them in his pocket".⁷ Yet, his soul is tormented and George is controlled by "human vice" which is constructed in the individual an instinct for crime and evil. Dreiser states, "Men are still led by instincts before they are regulated by knowledge. It is instinct which recalls the criminal—it is instinct, (where highly organized reasoning is absent), which gives the criminal his feeling of danger, his fear of wrong".⁸ That is to say, this animal instinct attributed to human being when he is threatened by danger and fear which drive him to commit criminal acts. In these terms, Hustwood, is oriented to these forces of materialistic environment, heredity, and fate. Spencer describes this feeling of danger which stimulates human instinct to some acts as follows,

Escape from enemies supposes motions within the organism, related in kind and rapidity to motions within it. Destruction of prey requires a particular combination of subjective actions, fitted in degree and succession to overcome a group of objective ones. And so with those countless automatic processes exemplified in works of *animal instinct* [...] *Alike in the simplest inferences of the child, and the most complex ones of the man of science, we find a correspondence between simultaneous and successive changes in the organism, and co-existences and sequences in its environment.* (emphasis added)⁹

For Spencer, there are forces which push the individual to behave in similar way with animalistic instinct as a result of the changes in the environment which make influence on the individual. Following Spencer's idea, Benedict Giamo (1996) claims, "this vision sees *Hustwood* as shaped by forces beyond the control of his will, be they, or inscrutable powers, or chemisms".¹⁰ Indeed, he plans his escape and makes a trick that *Drouet* is injured, so he tells *Carrie* to go with him to see *George* in hospital.

Hurstwood's troubles continues in New York, his business does not fit to this new life of Chicago and financial troubles start to overload on him; he lost his position, his name and worse he has no friends there. The environment of New York makes no opportunity for poor men and *Hurstwood* is determined by this law, "The sea was already full of whales. A common fish must needs to disappear wholly from view, remain unseen. In other words, *Hurstwood* was nothing".¹¹ Dreiser compares *Hurstwood* to a fish between whales or a poor man among rich personalities and businessmen, so he is worth nothing with the businessmen of New York.

Accordingly, *Charles Drouet* does not miss the influences of outside forces and heredity; he pretends to be free of any consideration, but in reality he has to work hard insuring himself in this severe society. For example, when he is leaving with *Carrie* he has to leave her alone for some days in order to work. Then, *Drouet* appears as wealthy man in a benevolent appearance and a man of experience with women too. Dreiser notes,

“A strong physical nature actuated by a keen desire for the feminine was the next. A mind free of any consideration of the problems or forces of the world and actuated not by greed but an insatiable love of variable pleasure—woman—pleasure”.¹² In other words, Mr. Drouet in a well-built appearance reflects his strong desire for women, and his mindset is shown as being free from social troubles and focuses on the pleasures of life. However, Charles is less clever and wealthy than George Hurstwood. As a response, Carrie decided to abandon the former for the latter and this shows clearly Drouet weakness since he is less wealthy and all what he has done do not suffice the life she is dreaming of. For this, Hurstwood is the fittest; a man of position, a romantic lover and above all he is rich. Indeed, Charles Drouet is determined by forces which are beyond his control such as the environment which makes this social stratification including his passion for women and sex. For instance, he offers Carrie a sum of money and never does it for a poor man. Dreiser states, “He [Drouet] would not have given the same amount to a poor young man could not, in the nature of things, have appealed to him like a poor young girl. Femininity affected his feelings. *He was the creature of inborn desire*”. (emphasis added)¹³ From the above quotation, we can see clearly that Drouet possesses an instinct desire for women which controls him.

To reinforce what has been said, Theodore Dreiser claims,

We see man far removed out of the lairs of the jungles, *his innate instincts* dulled by too near an approach to free will, *his free will* scarcely sufficiently developed to replace his instincts and afford him perfect guidance. He is becoming too wise to hearken always to *instincts and desires*; he is still too weak to always prevail against them. *As beast, the forces of life aligned him with them.* (emphasis added)¹⁴

Dreiser sums up the ideas of social Darwinism in this quotation and argues that when the individual is forced to change his habits or living place; his instincts appeals to free will, but things do not happen as he may wish and he will find himself controlled by his instincts and desires in which he cannot revolt against, yet these characteristics are forged in human kind similarly as in animal order.

As a matter of fact, the three characters Caroline Meeber, Charles Drouet, and George Hurstwood are all engaged in what Herbert Spencer names “ The Survival of the Fittest” or the struggle for existence between the unfit and the fittest which is undoubtedly related to the rules of natural selection in the order of life, as Spencer notes, “Always there must have been, and always there must continue to be, a survival of the fittest: natural selection must have been in operation at the outset, and can never cease to operate”.¹⁵ Dreiser makes use of this view through his protagonist character Carrie in her struggle for life, so she selects her suitors from different creeds such as wealth and intelligence regardless reason and moral codes, yet her fast ability of interaction with the environment and her lovers is the gift which Carrie is endowed with. Dreiser adds,

Ah, how rapidly women learn. In the main they are Jesuits by instinct. *Endow them with beauty, and within the possibilities of their environment they will pick and choose. Show them two men and they will understand which one appreciates women most.* Such fine methods of comparison man does not possess. It is an inherited qualification of sex, developed by ages of necessity. (emphasis added)¹⁶

Deirdre Anne Pettipiece (2002) writes on this merit, “Dreiser youthful heroine makes it to the top of social ladder by “selecting” first Drouet, a budding entrepreneur, and then Hurstwood, a successful married businessman, to make her social financial ascent”.¹⁷ Accordingly, Carrie admires a lot Mr. Hurstwood who gives her impressions of being in service, so when they are together in Drouet flat, George invites Carrie to play euchre with them and gives Charles a hint that he should teach his wife how to play. “I don’t know how to play,” said Carrie. “Charlie, you are neglecting a part of your duty,” he observed to Drouet, most affably. “ Between us, though,” he went on, “we can show you”.¹⁸ From this quotation, Hurstwood makes Carrie feels at ease and gives her confidence to join them, thus he uses this tact to gain one step in advance over his opponent.

In fact, the two men’s fierce competition about the young girl continues and results in many effects. Hurstwood follies about Carrie perpetuate, he wanted to have her above any

circumstances, and he thinks she suits him more than to Mr. Drouet, so for this he envies Charlie for a victory more than any man. “He wanted to win Carrie because he thought her fate mingled with his was better than if it was united with Drouet’s. He envied the Drummer his conquest as he had never envied any man in the course of his experience”.¹⁹ Meriam Gogol (1995) adds on this, “Carrie’s performance in the Elks’ theatrical benefit, for example, creates a focus for exposing and intense homosocial²⁰ contest of the two male friends, Drouet and Hurstwood”.²¹ It is clear that in the last performance in the Elks theatre made the struggle over Carrie more apparent between the two men Charles Drouet and George Hustwood.

Actually, Hurstwood do not know exactly where he set his feet and what troubles he has with his wife, and forced to leave his job, his friends, his old life, so he has many difficulties to deal with his conditions. He looked controlled by social forces and his desire for love and better life, but he has to continue in his quest for survival.

A prisoner of fate, held enchained for his own delight, he does not know that the walls are tall, that the sentinels of life are forever pacing, musket in hand. He cannot perceive that all joy is within and not without. He must be for the scaling of society, for overpowering the sentinel [...] we may be sure that society has been a struggle against until death alone would stop the individual from contention and evil.(emphasis added)²²

From the above quotation, Dreiser compares Hurstwood to a prisoner of fate and claims that the barriers of life are always in front of man’s guise, yet happiness is within these confrontations and not without. Indeed, man should resist and fight. The writer then points that society is a continuous struggle in the “Survival of the Fittest”, and the hardships of life which do not last until the individual dies and vanishes from all vice and virtue.

Moreover, individual struggle for life and better conditions pushes Carrie to follow her adventure, so she goes with Hurstwood to Montreal even above her will, and later on she settles with him in New York, a city which is the mirror of fashion and urbanization despite the fact that the condition there are so hard and not really helpful for the poor. Dreiser states,

“He [Hurstwood] felt that his position was most difficult. He would have to look about at once and get started. Ah, and how. And oh, worst of all, it would need to be done in a strange city and among strange people. He would not have his friends. Nostalgia began to affect his vitals. (emphasis added)²³ In other words, Hurstwood feels the change in this strange city, so he is no longer in the same position. Also, this city is described as the one in which live the wealthiest of men who dominate over all lower class incomes, and it is a city of Millionaires within a conspicuous life where celebrities, artists, and businessmen live. “The rich had not become so conspicuously rich as to drown all moderate incomes in obscurity. The attention of the inhabitants was not so distracted by local celebrities in the dramatic, artistic, social and religious fields as to shut the well-positioned man from view”.²⁴ This quotation shows that life can afford a luxurious life for wealthy men who gain more and drown the poor to decent obscurity, so this is what is meant by “the Survival of the fittest” in the American capitalist society which gives no chance for the poor.

Futhermore, Dreiser argues that society is the symbol of vulgarity which he compares to animal order in which he argues that when individuals are in state of power they are praised by everybody, but in his failure everybody turns against them, yet he illustrates this by the Siberian wolfs which devours the one who fails to survive in the flock, so society is set in a similar way, Dreiser claims,

Society is a terrible avenger of insult. Have you ever heard of the Siberian wolves? When one of the pack falls through weakness, the others devours him. It is not an elegant comparison—but there is something wolfish in society. Laura has mocked it with pretence, and society, which is made up of pretences, will bitterly resent the mockery.²⁵

Besides, Hurstwood continues his conquest and the struggle for life. As a matter of fact, George’s earnings do not suffice his life in New York, so he cannot permit himself to his previous luxurious life of Chicago. Later on, the dramatic event comes, so the owner of the Ground in the Warren Sreets where Hurstwood and his partner Mr. Shaughnessy found

their establishment is sold and surprisingly by this tragedy their business is shrinking, yet Mr. Shaughnessy refuses to open elsewhere since he sees no use of Hurstwood. Indeed, his worries grow serious since in New York things are different from Chicago and above all, he has no friends and no relation there. In this view, Dreiser adds,

The approaching change now took on most serious aspect to Hurstwood. Dissolution meant the loss of his thousand dollars, and he could not save another thousand in time. He understood as well as anything that Shaughnessy was merely tired of the arrangement and he would probably lease the new corner.²⁶

In this way, Hurstwood is eliminated in the struggle for life and has gone bankrupt by losing his thousand dollars and his partner tricks him to start his business elsewhere, so he ends with a difficult financial situation. Praisley Livingston (1991) comments on this, “Great emphasis is placed on Hurstwood’s inability to learn to content himself with more modest means, and as his financial resources dwindle—a disastrous business venture robbing him his capital”.²⁷ By this, Hurstwood sinks more and more in financial troubles and the fact of his misadventure with Carrie causes him to lose his position as a manager and now he is driven down to self-destruction, thus George cannot resist beyond all this effects which render his struggle more complex and exclude him from the struggle of the fittest. To illustrate this idea, Spencer suggests,

the life is comparatively simple, or where surrounding circumstances render some one function supremely important, the survival of the fittest may readily bring about the appropriate structural change, without any aid from the transmission of the functionally-acquired modifications. But in proportion as the life grows complex—in proportion as healthy existence cannot be secured by a large endowment of some one power”. (emphasis added)²⁸

In other words, the forces which circle the person predetermine his roles and orient them in the survival of the fittest that produces social change, so in this, he has no ability to act beyond his will, thus he will be subject to these powers which he cannot escape.

Moreover, Carrie is controlled by chance, fate, her mobility, and many things happen beyond her will within this changing social sphere. In fact, Mr. Hurstwood is unable to secure

their expenses and he fails to get a job, so his growing debts lead Carrie to look for a job. Then, Sister Carrie faces hard situation until she finds something as chorus girl and later she becomes a successful actress in the theatre. It is assumed that Carrie always reacts against the social forces which determine her will, so she succeeds in theatre to gain a considerable sum of money and becomes a famous actress. Indeed, some newspapers such as “*World*” and “*Herald*” publish articles about Carrie and her triumph, “her picture was in the “*World*” once or twice, and an old “*Herald*” he [Hurstwood] found in a chair informed him that she had recently appeared with some others at a benefit for something or other” (emphasis added).²⁸ Hurstwood learns about Carrie’s success from these newspapers. Andrew Lees writes, “ [Hurstwood] sinks deeper into destitution that is all the more striking because of the way in which Dreiser contrasts it with the good fortune that comes to Carrie as she becomes a famous actress”.²³ Obviously, the traditional roles are inverted and Carrie rises to success while Hurstwood falls into failure and destruction.

Furthermore, Carrie starts to examine the flaws she sees in Charles Drouet during the time they spend together and her admiration for him starts to decline. “She really was enamoured of Drouet. A little living with him convinced her of that. She was more clever than he. In a dim way she was beginning to see where he lacked”.³¹ By the coming of Mr. Hurstwood, it is the clash of the differences that Carrie sees in the two men and the former’s cleverness is unquestionable over the latter. Dreiser notes, “When Hurstwood she met a man who was more clever than Drouet in hundred ways”.³² Carrie selects in the first time Charles Drouet and when she finds the lacks he has she abandons him for Mr. Hurstwood.

Charles Drouet, the salesman, is one of the characters which are defeated in the battle of love, and loses his mistress, and by the newspapers he learns about Carrie’s latest crowning achievement; he tried to befriend her again, as easy as, he thought, but she has

learnt enough from the experiences of life and understands his game, so she refused to renew her friendship for Drouet. Dreiser claims,

Evidently he expected to restore their old friendship at once and without modification. It was her feeling, however, that it could not be. She understood him better now—understood the type. He was not anyone whom she could admire, or even associate with pleasantly. The world had taught her so much. She wondered that he did not appreciate the change.³³

Drouet fails in his attempt to befriend Carrie again, and on this subject she doesn't admire him as she used to do years ago. Indeed, she knows that her first lover will not like her changing attitude, thus Carrie fight to rise above her conditions and Charles Drouet and George Hurstwood fight to win her love. To illustrate individuals' struggle for life and the fact that everyone has to maintain himself in this competition for existence, Spencer affirms,

Now if the individuals of species are thus necessarily made unlike, in countless ways and degrees — if the complicated sets of rhythms which we call their functions, though similar in the general characters, are dissimilar in their details — if in one individual the amount of action in particular direction is greater than in any other individual, or if here peculiar combination gives a resulting force which is not found elsewhere; then, among all the individuals, some will be liable than others to have their equilibria overthrown by a particular incident force, previously unexperienced.³⁴

From the above quotation, it is apparent that the difference exists between the individuals in society and the force of some of them makes the distinction of the strongest from the weak, yet in the struggle for the survival; the equation says that the fittest resists all temptations while the weak or the unfit is excluded from this fight.

In addition to that, Dreiser makes a critical statement through his character Bob Ames who is portrayed as being wise, educated, and contrasts the conspicuous way of his people in New York. Bob tells Carrie that happiness has no concern with wealth or materialism, he exclaims, "It's man who fails in his mind who fails completely. Some people get the idea that their happiness lies in wealth and position".³⁵ In simple words, Bob insists that the position and wealth are not the essence of life and that success lays in reason and the freshness of human spirit.

As a result, Hurstwood slides his way down to a decent life of beggary; failing in his struggle to improve his situation and he couldn't find peace neither in Chicago nor New York City; he loses his name and his position and ruins his paternal duty as a father of a family. In addition, George becomes weak; ill-fed and his physical and moral state is deteriorated, "bad and irregular eating was sapping every function of his body".³⁶ Indeed, Mr. Hurstwood loses everything and becomes unworthy man who strolls from the streets down to the bowery where he lives and after much suffering and despair, he decides to commit a suicide by turning on the gas in his room, Deiser argues, "he turned the gas on again, but applying no much. Even then he stood there, hidden wholly in that kindness which is night, while the uprising fumes filled the room. When the odor reached his nostrils he quit his attitude and fumbled for bed".³⁷ In this tragic way, Hurstwood stops struggling and finds that death is the only solution to his constant troubles.

Therefore, the three characters are controlled by love, desire, money, and environmental facts as they have conspiracy one to another and their failures are sometime justified by the superficial relationships and irresponsible actions. Carrie leaves Drouet for Hurstwood who is more wealthy, and George in his turn leaves his family for Caroline. Thus, Charles is tricked by his friend George and Carrie in her turn runs from him. By doing so, it is clear that no one of them is free and they are all engaged in the "Survival of the Fittest" and controlled by forces of environment and heredity. Cynthia Burklead asserts, "The Alaskan novels of Jack London and *Sister Carrie* by Theodore Dreiser are examples of literary naturalism. True naturalism is bleakly deterministic, offering no salvation for humans suffering under the unconquerable forces of heredity and environment" (emphasis added).³⁸ There is no doubt that Dreiser's characters are the product of heredity environmental determinism. Indeed, this is what makes the Dreiser's characters governed by Spencer's law of "the Survival of The Fittest".

Conclusion:

To conclude, this chapter attempts to portray characters struggle in Spencer's account for "the Survival of the Fittest" or the fight for existence in the changes which occur in society mainly the American urban one of the nineteenth century, yet individuals are controlled by inner forces of heredity, instinct, desire and passion including outside forces of environment which make them unable to act beyond their will. Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) is a story of rise and fall, for instance Carrie Meeber started from nothing and climbs to the hedge of society, while George Hurstwood begins from his luxurious life and respected position to lose in his tragic downfall. Indeed, Dreiser uses these ideas borrowing from Social Darwinism, basing theoretically on Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Biology* (1964) which examines man behavior in society similarly as it occurs in animal order.

Affinities between Emile Zola's *Nana* (1900) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1880)

Emile Zola the father of Naturalism, grants much of his characteristics to Theodore Dreiser the American naturalist since the former has marked the beginning of the movement in France and the latter comes later as a result of the extension of Naturalism to America. The two writers are from different times and locations, but they still shares many similarities by exploring the issue of determinism in both Novels, Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Carrie* (1900). As a theoretical material we made reference to the ideas of Social Darwinism as they are introduced by Herbert Spencer in his work, *The Principles of Biology* (1864). As a result, one can notice many similarities between the two novels, to the exception of some differences. Indeed, this made the possibility of analyzing both novels in a comparative study.

In fact, both protagonists Nana and Carrie are controlled by heredity and environmental forces. Zola's *Nana* born from a poor family and grows up in the streets of Paris and this situation pushed her to turn to prostitution to make a living and feeds her son

and she has inherited much from her mother Gervaise such as alcoholism and sexual relation. Similarly, Carrie raised from a poor family of middle-class Columbia city; she must leave home in early age seeking for a job to secure her life and looking for better conditions. However, Nana is framed in a decent birth, but Carrie has a normal one, but poverty and influences of environment drives both protagonists to many misadventures with men.

Then, although Nana is shown in another way and as typical prostitutes who has many sexual relations with several individuals of different social positions, but Carrie implicitly appears in less aggressive and shocking way than Nana; she wanted to marry Drouet and later leaves him to marry George Hurstwood legally in New York. Then, Carrie sticks to the sense of marriage and conventional standards of a relation, but what she shares with Nana is the extreme desire to wealth and money.

Besides, both protagonists are controlled by this animalistic instinct which resides in human nature. In the one hand, this predisposition creates the “human vice” which pushes Nana to make of her body as the filthy beast of love and sexuality which devours men and letting most of them in ruin or death. On the other hand, Carrie looks as a Narcissist creature which is led by her desire for wealth and material that never makes her satisfied with both of her lovers, she left the first and ruins the second who commits a suicide.

Morover, Carrie and Nana are both affected by the environment and both are theatrical actresses. The case of Nana is little different, she shows extremely her nudity in public way and all men succumb as dogs to her charms. As for Carrie she becomes a theatrical figure which lasts at end in the novel by having all what she wants, but she is still not satisfied. Both female characters struggles in the course of “the Survival of The fittest”, so Nana after having much success and fame, she catches the sall-pox from her child and the two die pretty soon. By contrast, Carrie does not end in such tragic way as Nana, she makes appeal to her

consciousness and feels that she never feels complete and her life is shallow. Indeed, both of them fail in the struggle of life in a way or another.

Accordingly, concerning the male characters of the two novels, in Zola's *Nana* (1880) several men struggle in "the Survival of the Fittest" and most of them ruined by Nana's huge demands for money using her sexuality to this purpose. For instance, she ruins Lieutenant Philippe Hugon to imprisonment, his brother George ends in death, Comte Muffat de Beuville in family destruction and financial loss, Comte Xavier de Vandevres loses his fortune and commits a suicide, yet Foucament disappears in the China Sea.

Carrie Meeber follows her desire for money and luxurious life, so she abandons Charles Drouet who saves her from a miserable state and does the same with George Hurswood who sacrifices his family, his position, and he even steals money for her sake, thus his merit is to die in the bowery by committing a suicide. Indeed, some of these characters are driven by their instincts which appeals to human-vice and criminal acts, thus they all controlled by forces of environment or inner forces.

In conclusion, Émile Zola and Theodore Dreiser are largely influenced by these scientific theories emerged in the nineteenth century including Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism which is adapted from Darwinian evolutionary theory to the state of human environment. Indeed, relying on this theory it has been possible to discuss the issue of determinism of both novels. However, of the difference of the two writers' backgrounds, naturalism as a movement makes them sharing many affinities in which this work tries as far as possible to prove by exploring the themes heredity and environmental determinism in the two novels, Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Carrie* (1900).

Notes and References

- 1 Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology VOL I* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1864), 87-88.
- 2 Theodore Dreiser (1900), *Sister Carrie* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 3.
- 3 Ibid., 4.
- 4 Ibid., 13.
- 5 Keith Newlin, *The Oxford Handbook of American Literary Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press), 493.
- 6 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 232.
- 7 Ibid., 270.
- 8 Ibid., 269.
- 9 Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, 77.
- 10 Benedict Giomo, *On The Bowery: Confronting Homelessness in American Society* (Iowa: the university of Iowa, 1989), 127.
- 11 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 305.
- 12 Ibid., 6.
- 13 Ibid., 63.
- 14 Ibid., 73.
- 15 Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, 468.
- 16 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 93.
- 17 Deirdre Anne Pettipiece, *Sex Theories and the Shaping of the Two Moderns: Hemingway and H. D* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3.
- 18 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 94.
- 19 Ibid., 122.
- 20 According to Oxford Dictionaries Online, “homosocial” is related to social interaction between members of the same sex, typically men.
- 21 Gogol Miriam, *Theodore Dreiser: Beyond Naturalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 85.
- 22 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 132-133.
- 23 Ibid., 288.
- 24 Ibid., 184.
- 25 Ibid., 305.
- 26 Ibid., 344.
- 27 Praisley Livingston, *Literature and Rationality: Ideas of Agency in Theory and Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 134.
- 28 Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, 453.
- 29 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 459.
- 30 Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820- 1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 130.
- 31 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* 92-93.
- 32 Ibid., 93.
- 33 Ibid., 473.
- 34 Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, 444.
- 35 Ibid., 482.
- 36 Ibid., 491.

³⁷ Ibid., 499.

³⁸ Cynthia Burkhead, *Student Companion to John Steinbeck* (Greenwood: Greenwood Press, 2002), 28.

General Conclusion

In the light of all what have been said, we have provided a comparative study of Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) which attempted to analyze the issue of determinism basing on its two main standpoints, heredity and environment including the "the Survival of the Fittest". As a theoretical material, we made reference to the theory of Social Darwinism relying on Herbert Spencer's *The Principles of Biology* (1864). In addition, we have supported this research with a historical and literary overview which contributes to link both literatures.

This research concluded that both Emile Zola and Theodore Dreiser shared some affinities at the level of history including the influence of the former over the latter. In fact, Dreiser as an American naturalist awes Zola who was known as the father of naturalism in France as well as in the world's literature. Although, they wrote from different countries, but they still share many similarities. Then, this study demonstrated that the characters of both novels are trapped in the environmental and biological forces of heredity and inner state by which they could not rise above their will. Besides, we deduced that the individuals are engaged in Spencer's account for "Survival of the Fittest" in both novels including both protagonists, Nana and Carrie Meeber are controlled by environmental influences. The two heroines are trapped by their inner instincts, passion, desire, materialism, and wealth. However, we have noticed that Zola's heroine was shown in more shocking way comparing to Carrie's image. Moreover, Nana is the wild beast of sexuality that devoured her lovers and let them to ruin. Indeed, Nana fails in her struggle and dies with a corrupt body. However, Carrie became a successful actress she continues in her life, but she remains in an empty spirit in her meaningless life.

Indeed, in the last analysis; this comparative study based on the Spencerian theory of Social Darwinism tried as far as possible to explore the issue of determinism in both novels of

Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880) and Theodore Dreiser *Sister Carrie* (1900), thus this work can be extended to a further study discussing the issue of feminism in both novels.

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